EERIE #44 DEC. 1972

76 ILLUSTRATED PAGES OF TERROR AND SUSPENSE

EERIE

PDC
A WARREN MAGAZINE 563205 75¢

DAX THE WARRIOR FINDS DEATH IN THE "LAKE OF GOLD" Page 66

"EERIE'S MONSTER GALLERY"

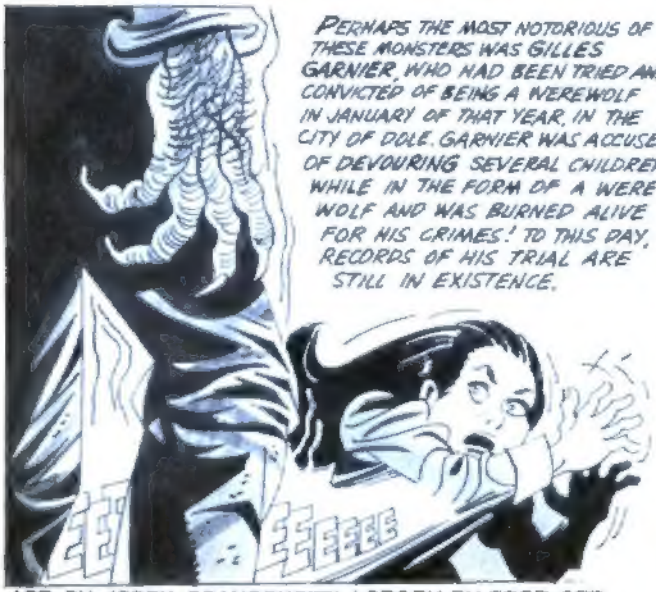
WHAT'S YOUR STAND ON WEREWOLVES? BELIEVE IN THEM OR NOT? READ THIS... MAYBE IT WILL HELP YOU DECIDE...

"WEREWOLF-FACT OR FANTASY?"

BELIEF IN THE EXISTENCE OF THE WEREWOLF, OR LOUP-GAROU, HAS BEEN KNOWN THROUGHOUT EUROPE SINCE THE BEGINNING OF RECORDED HISTORY. SUCH A BELIEF STILL CONTINUES IN THE SLOVAKIAN COUNTRIES TO THIS VERY DAY. DURING THE TIME OF THE ANCIENT ROMANS, THE WEREWOLF WAS REFERRED TO AS A "SKIN-CHANGER" OR "TURN-COAT."

THESE ROMAN TERMS SURVIVED IN EUROPE THROUGH THE MIDDLE AGES. DURING THAT TIME, SCHOLARS BELIEVED THAT WHILE A WEREWOLF WAS IN HUMAN FORM, HIS WOLF'S HAIR GREW INWARDS AND WHEN HE BECAME A WOLF, HE SIMPLY TURNED HIMSELF INSIDE OUT! ACCORDING TO COURT RECORDS OF THE PERIOD, COUNTLESS SUSPECTED "WEREWOLVES" WERE PARTIALLY SKINNED ALIVE IN ATTEMPTS TO REVEAL THIS INGROWING HAIR!

A PARTICULARLY IMPRESSIVE CASE OF WEREWOLFERY WAS RECORDED IN SEPTEMBER, 1573, IN THE CITY OF DOLE, FRANCE, WHEN THE COURT OF PARLIAMENT ORDERED THE COUNTRY PEOPLE TO TAKE UP WEAPONS AND BEAT THE WOODS FOR A PACK OF WEREWOLVES THAT WAS TERRORIZING THE COUNTRYSIDE! THESE WOLF-MEN REPORTEDLY CARRIED OFF A NUMBER OF CHILDREN, AND INJURED TRAVELERS PASSING THROUGH THE DISTRICT!



PERHAPS THE MOST NOTORIOUS OF THESE MONSTERS WAS GILLES GARNIER, WHO HAD BEEN TRIED AND CONVICTED OF BEING A WEREWOLF IN JANUARY OF THAT YEAR. IN THE CITY OF DOLE, GARNIER WAS ACCUSED OF DEVOURING SEVERAL CHILDREN WHILE IN THE FORM OF A WEREWOLF AND WAS BURNED ALIVE FOR HIS CRIMES! TO THIS DAY, RECORDS OF HIS TRIAL ARE STILL IN EXISTENCE.

TODAY, IN OUR MODERN AGE OF ENLIGHTENMENT, WEREWOLFERY IS REGARDED AS ONE OF THE DELUSIONS OF A DERANGED MIND, CONNECTED WITH AN URGE TOWARDS CANNIBALISM. MEN CHANGING INTO WOLF-MEN IS SCOFFED AT. YET SCIENTISTS HAVE ONLY JUST BEGUN TO PROBE THE DARK RECESSES WITHIN MAN'S BRAIN. PERHAPS THEY'LL SOMEDAY FIND THAT DEEP INSIDE OUR MINDS, A "WEREWOLF" LURKS IN ALL OF US!

ART BY JERRY GRANDENETTI / STORY BY FRED OTT

ISSUE No. 44

DEC. 1972

OUR COVER:
Dax the Warrior's "Lake of Gold" shimmers with more than mere riches! Monstrous beings, portrayed by cover artist Luis Dominguez, protect the devil-treasure with their lives. Story begins on Page 66.

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EERIE

4 **DEAR COUSIN EERIE** "Many young kids are taking drugs to escape reality," writes reader Peter Guzman of Tucson, "I don't take drugs, but a strong dose of EERIE to escape!"

6 **CRAZY MAZIE** Home on the range for fading cowboy star Sturnam Banks meant the long wait for death, gallantly riding astride his once glamorous, but now stuffed steed, Mazie!

16 **EVERLASTING MORTALITY** Query: What's black and blue and dead all over? A bruised vampire! . . . or so our hero discovers in this little question and answer game!

21 **EERIE'S BOOK REVIEWS** The novels of H.G. Wells are explored this issue as COUSIN EERIE once again leads you down the path of the world's greatest literature!

22 **THRILL OF THE HUNT** You run . . . and you know the sickening feeling of being chased to the death! But you will rob your pursuers of their quarry . . . by destroying yourself!

32 **HAND OF THE DISCARNATE** Step right up folks, and see the amazing freaks in our carnival side show. Two brothers who would even kill for their father's wealth.

38 **MERVIN'S DEAD RINGER** Poor Mervin Sniddle was the world's biggest failure! His only friend was an alarm clock! But the poor clock had this horrible problem with ticks!

42 **TILLER OF THE SOUL** Phinneas needed a friend! He was so lonely! Then one day, Phinneas saw hands reaching up from a grave! Phinneas finally had his friend!

50 **THE PARADE** Presenting the first tale in a series of new EERIE short-short shockers! Who was the mysterious stranger who brought The Parade to the simple folk of Sleepy Grove?

64 **EERIE FAN FARE** Profile of cover artist Luis Dominguez, plus a treasure trove of fan stories. Including "The Fatal Dream," "The Feast" and "Back From The Dead!"

66 **LAKE OF GOLD** Dax, lord of the Isle of Peace welcomes Sarko the bold, only to be attacked viciously when the barbarian realizes what treasures lie in the heart of Dax's lake!

"'The Caterpillars' was almost too terrifying!"

Just snatched a body that happened to be clutching a copy of EERIE #41. This is the first EERIE I've read since #23 and I like the changes, extending the letters and Fanfare to two pages each. Best story was "The Caterpillars." It's sure to be a classic. "West Coast Turnaround" had a fantastic shock ending. Didn't care for "Heir Pollution" because the ending was a letdown. Same goes for "Warped!" Dax was good although the plot was a bit weak. Real people as chess pieces isn't terribly new. The safest way to comment about "The Safest Way" is to ignore it. All in all, EERIE #41, while not as good as my favorite issue—#20, still leaves you #1 in my book. Creepy, you're no relative of mine!

GEORGE EDGAR
Dunkirk, N.Y.

Especially liked "Heir Pollution" in EERIE #41. Dax was alright.

THOMAS HOUN
Woodstock, Va.

"Heir Pollution" in EERIE #41 was fantastic! Also dug "West Coast Turnaround" and "Warped!" Great plots! "Derelict" had good artwork. More Science Fiction, EERIE. We never get our fill. More Tom Sutton and Jose Bea.

MICHAEL FIELD
Narragansett, R.I.

EERIE #40 was fantastic! Top story was "The Brain of Frankenstein" by Fred Ott. Also enjoyed the Monster Gallery on Dracula, alias Vlad the Impaler. **(More about Vlad to come—ed.)** Also, cut down on Science Fiction. EERIE is a monster magazine!

SCOTT BAKER
Toronto, Canada

I have to comment on EERIE #'s 40 & 41. Both were shocking and sensational. Best stories in #40 were "The Brain of Frankenstein," "The Prodigy Son" and "Pity the Gravedigger." Favorites in #41 were "Warped!", "Heir Pollution," "The Caterpillars," and the Dax story, "Chess."

KURT GRUMBACH
Flushing, N.Y.

Much enjoyed EERIE #41. My favorite stories were "Warped!", "Heir Pollution" and "Chess," the Dax story. Really dug Dax fighting the Chess Master on the Chessboard. Didn't get too much out of "The Caterpillars" or "West Coast Turnaround" but they were okay.

HANK STALLINGS
Bellevue, Tenn.

Okay, I've just finished perusing EERIE #41 and here's my report, you little demon. Best stories were "Heir Pollution," "Warped!" and "West Coast Turnaround." Cousin EERIE, I have a confession to make. Before I read EERIE, I read Creepy first. Everytime. I hate to admit it, Cuz, but it seems to me like the Creep is getting ahead of you. If you want a suggestion, I advise you to run more vampire and werewolf stories. Glad to see you finally got a Fan Club of your own as it's about time. Creepy's had his own Fan Club since Creepy #5 if I'm not mistaken. As soon as I get my allowance, I'm joining up in your Fan Club.

MIKE DAVIDSON
Dublin, Ga.

For my money, your magazine is absolutely tops. The reason I'm writing is because of J.W. Zabel's letters. In EERIE #38, he wrote that people buy EERIE for the artwork, not the stories. Boy, the nerve! Then he writes in EERIE #40 and says he likes some of the writers. Too bad you have to have pictures with words although most like to read too.

SANDRA JOHNSON
Palmetto, Fla.

A scene from the chilling EERIE #41 epic, "The Caterpillars." Writes New York reader BARRY ROBIN, "EERIE #41 literally crawled with terror after I read the story.

Just got through reading "The Caterpillars" in EERIE #41 and almost put the book down before I finished because it was so terrifying! I've given up on Creepy and plan on burning all my old copies if you keep up the great work.

ROGER BROTHERTON
Okla. City, Okla.

I devour every EERIE I can get my hands on. Please don't ever change. What's happening now is that a lot of young kids are turning to drugs to escape reality. I don't take drugs but to occasionally escape from it all, I take a dose of EERIE, Creepy and Vampirella. Don't weaken EERIE with murder and Science Fiction stories.

PETER GUZMAN
Tucson, Ariz.

Concerning EERIE #41, I have but five things to say. (1) The photo of the skull on the FanFare pages was upside down. **(Negative—ed.)** (2) The cover was the best I've seen in a long time. I especially liked the way Sanjulian combined the colors blue and green. (3) Paul Neary's artwork on "Derelict" was just fantastic. (4) The story "The Safest Way" should not have been included, and (5) keep up the "Dax, the Warrior" series.

RICHARD DUCAR
Trenton, N.J.

Please do not discontinue Sword & Sorcery in EERIE. I've been a freak for Sword & Sorcery ever since Beowulf fought Grendl. Also a comment regarding J.W. Zabel's letter in EERIE #40. He states that Maroto's work is "pretty good" but "could be far better if he did not use special textures and techniques." I personally think Maroto's work ranks with that of Aubrey Beardsley who was rather noted for his "textures and techniques."

JIM VARNEY
Nashville, Tenn.

The cover of EERIE #41 was super! As was the interior artwork. Especially enjoyed "Warped!" and "West Coast Turnaround." Dax, the warrior is a great series. We want zombies.

BILL MOLT
Norwood, Colo.

EERIE #40 was one of the best issues I've ever read. Monster Gallery was so good that I counted it a separate story. You've certainly discovered a pair of talents in Mike Ploog and Fred Ott. Their work on "The Brain of Frankenstein" was fantastic. I hope to see Dax never end.

TOM SZEBERENY
Montreal, Canada

What I really go for in EERIE, Creepy and Vampirella are the covers! For instance, I bought EERIE #41 just for Sanjulian's absolutely superfragilistic cover painting! His choice of color and art from the Dax story "Chess" was beautiful! Speaking of which, I think the Dax series is great and keeps EERIE a nose ahead of Creepy. "Chess" was truly great, one of the best Dax stories so far.

ARTHUR MEIER
Agincourt, Canada

I've been reading EERIE for months now and I just couldn't pass up the chance to tell you how great I think it is. I've just finished EERIE #41 and I am truly amazed at the stories and art therein. Your magazine is getting bigger and better all the time. One question. My newsstand doesn't have either Creepy or Vampirella. What should I do?

DAVID ANDERSON
Wever, Iowa

Jump for joy is my first reaction but I guess you should check them out just to see how good a tome EERIE really is. To get Creepy & Vampirella to your newsstand, fill out the coupon on p.74 at the bottom left.

A chilling scene from Esteban Maroto's DAX The Warrior series. While many readers complain about the story line, even more rave over Maroto's realistic and horrifying art.

"I'd really like to see one of those caterpillars go after Uncle Creepy!"

If you're sincerely interested in readers' ideas to improve EERIE, Creepy and Vampirella, here are some suggestions. Cut down on the use of blurbs on the covers. Eg., Vampirella #5 had a perfect cover. Blurb only the cover story on the cover. Not so many photos, pictures, etc. on the letters pages, which will leave room for more letters. Don't keep printing excerpts from letters at the top of the letters pages. They add nothing and by their absence, will leave room for more letters. "Profiles" on the fan pages should be longer. Preview page is great. Begin naming the cover artist of the upcoming issue. Add still more pages. Get your writers to write more intelligent stories. Improve cover art. The "Inside #" column might well be expanded to a full page. The 50th Anniversary issues of EERIE and Creepy had better be well planned. Public interest ads are needed. Why not a 2-page centerfold of the cover?

RANDY PALMER
Arlington, Va.

Aargh! Thanx for writing, Randy & your missive's been taken under advisement. Most of the bases you cover have been & continue to be discussed. We'd like to hear what other readers think. Comments? Complaints?—ed.

EERIE #41 was great! You're really beating out old bubble-nosed Creepy! "The Caterpillars" was fantastic. I hope one of them gets to Creepy before long! So what if Uncle Creepy had a Fan Club before you. Big deal. EERIE is still tops in my book anyday.

D.F.
Orleans, Ind.

Best issue in some time was EERIE #40. For two reasons. It had great artists & writers and my letter made the letters pages. You've had a run of good issues lately, Cuz.

RICHARD MORGANA
Flushing, N.Y.

Three favorite stories in EERIE #40 were "The Brain of Frankenstein," "Deathfall" and "Pity the Gravedigger." You ought to launch a contest. EERIE. Have readers choose the best issue of EERIE ever published. It might be interesting, you know.

JOHN MATYSIAK
Detroit, Mich.

I've been a longtime EERIE and Creepy reader but I've never written you before. I felt I should because I wanted to try & set those of your readers who are complaining about sex straight! There is no way around sex. It is everywhere you go. The human body is the most beautiful thing in creation, especially as it is portrayed in Art. When readers say nudity is rotten, I'd like somebody to tell me how it's rotten. Okay? All of your stories are fantastic, EERIE. As an artist myself, I especially enjoy your art. Maroto is brilliant on the Dax series!

KYLE CLARK
Lansing, Mich.

"Deathfall" in EERIE #40 was different but good all the same. Stay away from Science Fiction, EERIE. We prefer vampires and werewolves to spacemen & rocketships. All I hear about anymore is about you and Uncle Creepy. By the way, how old is the Creep anyway? And what about Vampi? Is she related to you? She's cute like you.

LUELLEN SADLER
Oklahoma City, Okla.

Creepy is as old as he looks which is as old as the hills. Wormy is HIS niece, not mine.

Sanjulian's cover of EERIE #41 was fantastic! One of the greatest I've ever seen. Loved your Monster Gallery piece on Sawney Bean and crew. Glad to see you have your own EERIE ring now but you ought to have EERIE puzzles also. What about a paperback too like old baldy's?

JEFF KILIAN
Wichita, Kansas

INSIDE 44

Let the creaky doors of your imagination swing open, little ghoulie, and join me as we thrill together to tales of gore in this new issue of EERIE! We have a whole horde of surprises for you, produced by a roster of talent that's made the rest of the comics publishing world green with envy.

"Crazy Mazie," this issue's lead-off strip, page 6, is a product of the warped mind of John Cochran, late Editorial Director of the Warren magazines. "Crazy Mazie" was JC's (our office nickname for the Christ-like Cochran) last effort before leaving the company to polish up on his playwriting. The strip is aptly illustrated by another EERIE regular, artist Tom Sutton. Readers still haven't stopped raving about the last strip JC/Sutton collaborated on, "The Disenfranchised" in EERIE #39. We think you'll agree, however, that with "Crazy Mazie" this talented duo has far surpassed even their own earlier excellent efforts!

Vampire fanatics get their fill this issue with a Doug Moench terror tale, "Everlasting Mortality," on page 16. It's about the fearsome creatures of the night who live and feed in a modern-day world. Beware the next street corner, for they lie in wait, blood-thirsting for human flesh! Art is by long-time EERIE favorite, Jerry Grandenetti!

"The Thrill of the Hunt," page 22, another morbid miniscule from Moench, "was conceived," said the author, "when I read a newspaper story about a mass murderer in Ohio, who evaded the authorities for weeks by living in the woods and feeding off wild animal flesh!" With a tale like that, we had to assign the art to somewhat of a specialist in a realistic technique. It's handled aptly by the superb Martin Salvador!

Guess what? Doug-what's-his-name is back for his third try at notoriety this issue. The scarey-scripter has penned a shorty about gypsies, tramps and thieves in a carnival atmosphere. It's titled "Hand of the Discarnate," and artist Dube outdoes himself on the illustrating chores. Page 32.

This issue also serves as the proving grounds for a new two-page feature entitled, "EERIE Short-Short Shockers!" The Shocker is a short text story, which we think will carry quite a wallop! And you get three guesses who the author is! Mamma Moench, why ever are you pushing lil' Doug's stories?! Page 50.

Writer Doug Moench, who's trying to take over the world . . . starting first by dominating this issue of EERIE!

And, just to show that we've got other writers in this issue besides Doug Moench, there's "Tiller of the Soul," page 42, a Greg Potter mind-blower.

And writer-illustrator Esteban Maroto rounds out this issue with his latest installment of Dax the Warrior. This trip Dax battles Sarko the barbarian in "The Lake of Gold," page 66.

I love EERIE. Your covers are far creepier than Creepy's. I just began reading EERIE only a few months ago but I think it's fabulous!

HENRY LEE
Lincoln, Nebraska

EERIE #40 was terrifying! Particularly hair-raising were "The Brain of Frankenstein," "The Paradise Tree," and "Pity the Gravedigger."

ANTHONY ALVINO
Brooklyn, N.Y.

EERIE FAN CLUB

You asked for it! Announcing the New EERIE FAN CLUB! Join now! Get your 8-1/2 X 10" portrait of Cousin Eerie by Richard Corben PLUS a fantastic Club Badge AND individually numbered Membership Card! Send $2.00. Fill out the coupon now! Don't delay!

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ART BY TOM SUTTON/STORY BY J.R. COCHRAN

YOU REALLY KNEW HOW TO RIDE HER, DIDN'T YOU, STURNAM?
I GUESS I DID, ESTELLE. WE WAS THE BEST IN THEM DAYS. EVERYBODY SAID SO!
RIALTO
WES

AND THE TIRESOME DRIVE HOME..
BUT SHE'S GONE NOW, STURNAM. GONE FOREVER.
IT'S TOO BAD SHE HAD TO GO.
EVERYTHING DIES, STURNAM.

GOT SOME YOUNGINS' BACK THERE. LOOKIN' FOR TROUBLE, I GUESS
OH, NO!
THEY'RE GONNA RIDE ME, 'STELLE. TRYIN' TO GOAD ME, IF I GUESS RIGHT!

IF ONLY MAZIE WAS HERE! WE'D KILL 'EM IF MAZIE WAS HERE! OUTLAWS! SHE NEVER COULD TAKE THEM KIND!
OH, STURNAM! STOP TALKING ABOUT MAZIE. MAZIE'S GONE! SHE WAS JUST A HORSE! OH, I'M SCARED..

WHAT'RE WE GONNA DO, STURNAM?
MAZIE'D GIVE THEM A RUN FOR THEIR MONEY, ALL RIGHT! SHE'D SHOW 'EM HOW TO.
CAN'T YOU STOP TALKING ABOUT MAZIE? WE'RE IN TROUBLE, STURNAM!

LAY OFF ME, ESTELLE!
HE'S TRYIN' TO WOW HIS GIRL, SHOW HER HOW FAST HE CAN MAKE THE OLD JALOPY GO. CAN'T YUH SEE THAT, MELVIN?
HEY, OLD MAN! WHAT'RE YUH DOIN' IN THERE?

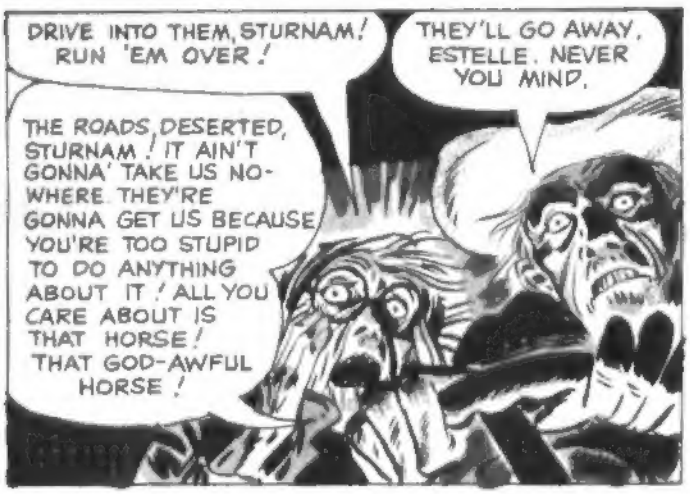
YOU BETTER WATCH OUT, OLD MAN! YOU'RE HEADED FOR A CRACK-UP!

ROLL UP YOUR WINDOW, STURNAM! I CAN'T STAND IT!

HEY, MAN! DON'T BE SO UNFRIENDLY!

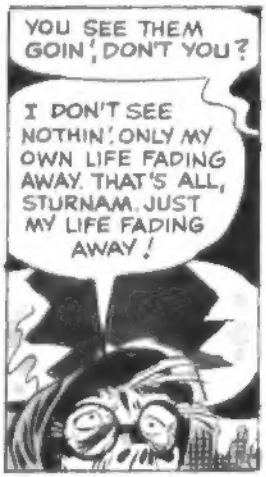
I CAN STILL HEAR THEM, STURNAM!
CLICK

NEED SOME HELP, LADY?


DRIVE INTO THEM, STURNAM! RUN 'EM OVER!
THEY'LL GO AWAY, ESTELLE. NEVER YOU MIND.
THE ROADS, DESERTED, STURNAM! IT AIN'T GONNA' TAKE US NO-WHERE. THEY'RE GONNA GET US BECAUSE YOU'RE TOO STUPID TO DO ANYTHING ABOUT IT! ALL YOU CARE ABOUT IS THAT HORSE! THAT GOD-AWFUL HORSE!

YOU DON'T GO CALLIN' MAZIE NONE OF YOUR SINFUL NAMES! THEY'LL GO AWAY, YOU HEAR ME?
SMASH!!
THEY'LL GO AWAY! THIS AIN'T THE WAY WE'RE GONNA' END. NOT THIS WAY!

YOU HEAR THAT?
HEAR WHAT?
THE POLICE SIREN!


YOU SEE THEM GOIN', DON'T YOU?
I DON'T SEE NOTHIN'. ONLY MY OWN LIFE FADING AWAY. THAT'S ALL, STURNAM. JUST MY LIFE FADING AWAY!

FEW MINUTES AND YOU WON'T SEE THEM ANYMORE, 'STELLE. THEY'LL BE GONE. POLICE ARE COMIN' UP HARD BEHIND US. YOU CAN SEE THEM IN THE REARVIEW MIRROR IF YOU LOOK HARD.
JUST MY LIFE, STURNAM. THAT'S ALL I SEE PASSIN' BEFORE ME.

QUIT YOUR MOANIN', WOMAN! WE'LL BE HOME SOON NOW. ALL SAFE AND SOUND. JUST LIKE NEW.
YOU'VE NEVER BELIEVED ME, HAVE YOU, STURNAM?

POLICE ARE WAVIN' US DOWN, 'STELLE. SEE 'EM NOW, DO YUH?

ANGELS GIVING YOU TROUBLE?
CYCLISTS GIVING YOU ANY TROUBLE, MISTER
WHAT'S THAT?

THEY NEARLY KILLED US! THAT'S ALL! NEARLY KILLED US!
SHUDDUP, 'ESTELLE. LET'S NOT WASTE THE POLICEMAN'S TIME, OKAY?
ASK HIM ABOUT MAZIE, OFFICER! THAT'S ALL, HE CAN TALK ABOUT! ASK HIM ABOUT MAZIE?

NAME?
KNOW WHAT'S PLAYIN' AT THE SPHINX THEATRE?
CAN I JUST HAVE YOUR NAME, SIR? I'D LIKE TO REPORT THIS?
REMEMBERS WHAT, MA'AM?
HE WANTS YOU TO GUESS IT. HE'S CRAZY! HE THINKS EVERYBODY STILL REMEMBERS!

DON'T YOU KNOW? I THOUGHT EVERYBODY KNEW!
SHUDDUP, ESTELLE. WILL YUH? JUST SHUDDUP! OKAY?
YOUR NAME PLEASE. AND WHEN DID THE INCIDENT OCCUR? I HAVE TO GET MOVING AGAIN.

STURNAM BANKS, OFFICER. SHE'S ESTELLE. WE LIVE OVER AT THE MORRIS TRAILER PARK, 2 MILES DOWN.
CYCLISTS FORCE YOU OFF THE ROAD?
HE STILL DOESN'T KNOW, STURNAM! WHAT ABOUT THE NAME, MAZIE. DOES MAZIE MEAN ANYTHING TO YOU?

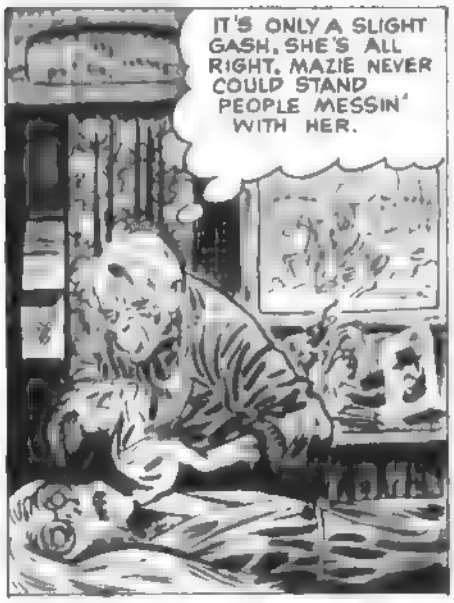
OKAY. THANKS FOR YOUR HELP!
ALWAYS PICKIN', AREN'T YOU, ESTELLE? ALWAYS PICKIN'. CAN'T YOU BE QUIET FOR FIVE MINUTES?
STURNAM BANKS, OFFICER! STURNAM BANKS!

HE GAVE YOU A CLUE WHEN HE ASKED YOU ABOUT THE SPHINX THEATRE, OFFICER!
POLICE
PDL
PLEASE, ESTELLE!

POLICE

I THOUGHT EVERYBODY KNEW, STURNAM. ISN'T THAT WHAT YOU ALWAYS SAY?

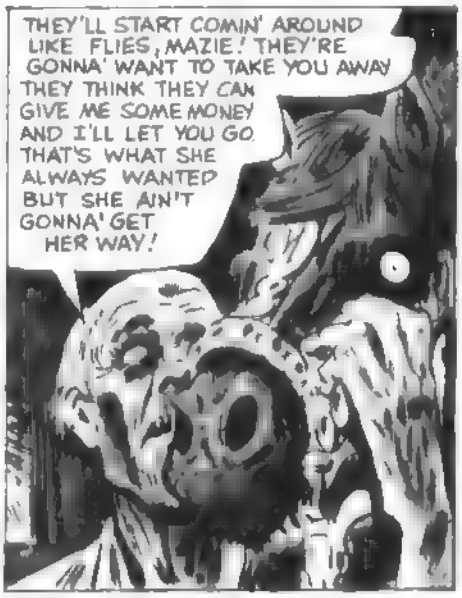
LATER... AT THE TRAILER COURT THEY CALL HOME.

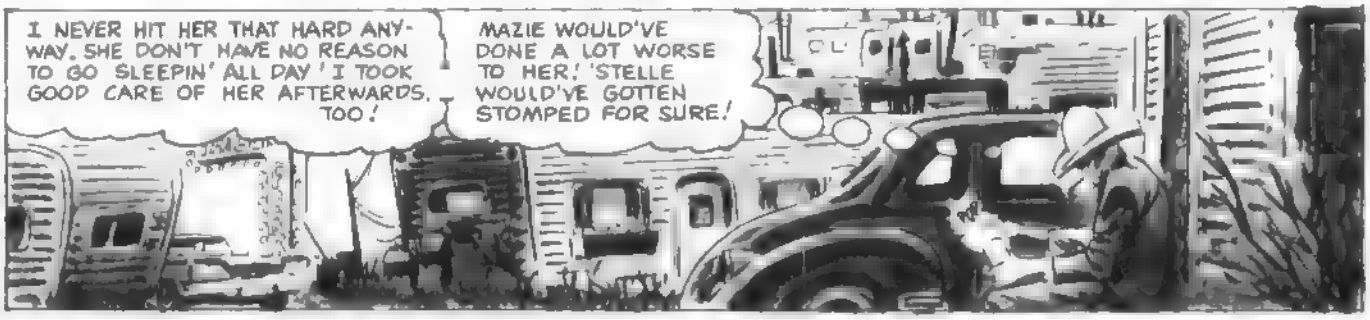

IT'S ONLY A SLIGHT GASH. SHE'S ALL RIGHT. MAZIE NEVER COULD STAND PEOPLE MESSIN' WITH HER.

MORNING, AND THE OLD MAN AWAKENS TO THE SOUND OF THE SCREEN DOOR BANGING CLOSED.
'STELLE? YOU AWAKE YET? OH, WELL I GUESS I'LL LET HER SLEEP. NO HARM IN LETTIN' HER SLEEP IT OFF.

OLD TIME COWBOY STAR BATTLES HELLS ANGELS!
THE GREAT 'SHOOT EM-UP' STURNAM BANKS BRAVELY OUT RACES MURDEROUS CYCLE GANG ROUDIES!

GOOD LORD! THEY PUT IT IN THE PAPERS. NOW THEY'RE GONNA' START COMIN' AROUND AGAIN ...PESTERIN' ME ABOUT MAZIE!
METS IN OPENING GAME


THEY'LL START COMIN' AROUND LIKE FLIES, MAZIE! THEY'RE GONNA' WANT TO TAKE YOU AWAY. THEY THINK THEY CAN GIVE ME SOME MONEY AND I'LL LET YOU GO. THAT'S WHAT SHE ALWAYS WANTED BUT SHE AIN'T GONNA' GET HER WAY!


I NEVER HIT HER THAT HARD ANYWAY. SHE DON'T HAVE NO REASON TO GO SLEEPIN' ALL DAY! I TOOK GOOD CARE OF HER AFTERWARDS, TOO!
MAZIE WOULD'VE DONE A LOT WORSE TO HER! 'STELLE WOULD'VE GOTTEN STOMPED FOR SURE!

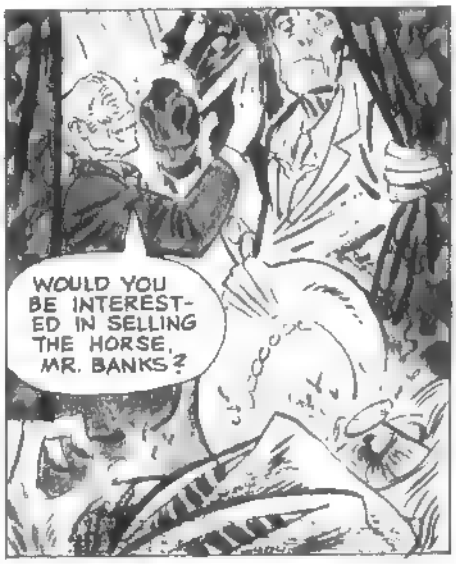
STURNAM BANKS, RIGHT'?

'STELLE? GET UP NOW WE GOT US SOME COMPANY!

EXCUSE ME, MR BANKS, BUT I SAW THE ITEM ABOUT YOU OVER THE WIRE SERVICES.. IS IT TRUE WHAT THEY SAID? ABOUT YOU STILL HAVING THE HORSE?
COURSE I GOT MAZIE WITH ME, AND DAMN IT ALL ...'STELLE... GET UP! SHE AIN'T FOR SALE! YOU WANT TO SEE HER?

IF I'M NOT BOTHERING ANYTHING.
NO TROUBLE, MISTER... UH...
MISTER BOURNE... SYLES BOURNE.

I CAN COME BACK LATER IF YOUR WIFE IS RESTING.
NO PROBLEM, MISTER...
I'VE SEEN ALL YOUR MOVIES AND ADMIRE YOU TREMENDOUSLY. MY KIDS ALWAYS USED TO ASK ABOUT YOU..
ESTELLE C'MON AND GET UP WE GOT COMPANY HERE.


WOULD YOU BE INTERESTED IN SELLING THE HORSE, MR. BANKS?

HORSE THIEF, HUNH?

YOU FOLKS NEVER GIVE UP, DO YUH?
YOU'RE ALWAYS AFTER ME, TRYIN' TO TAKE MAZIE AWAY, BUT IT AIN'T GONNA' WORK ...NOT THIS TIME... NOT EVER, MR. HORNE, OR WHATEVER YOUR NAME IS...

I'M REALLY SORRY TO HAVE TROUBLED YOU, MR BANKS I'VE ALWAYS BEEN A GREAT ADMIRER OF YOURS. I DIDN'T MEAN TO INTRUDE. I CAN LET MYSELF OUT. I'M TRULY SORRY IF I DISTURBED YOU.

BAM!

C'MON, ESTELLE. GET UP! JUST KILLED ME A HORSE THIEF.
THEY WERE TRYIN' TO TAKE MAZIE AWAY BUT I WOULDN'T LET THEM GOT ME A DERRINGER IN MY BELT! SHE COMES IN HANDY, YOU NEVER KNOW WHEN YOU'RE GONNA' NEED IT!

EASY, MAZIE, GIRL ...EASY

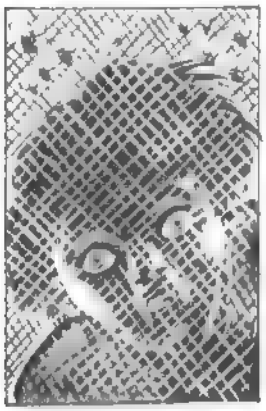
MYSTERIOUS SUPERNATURAL RIDER
STARRING STURNAM BANKS AND THE WONDER HORSE MAZIE
WILD PRAIRIE
GUNS WEST
STURNAM BANKS!

MOMMY! MOMMY! THEY JUST HAD GUN-SHOTS LIKE ON TV.

OH, REALLY? WHERE, TOMMY?
OVER THERE WHERE THOSE OLD PEOPLE LIVE.

OH REALLY? ON TV?
NO! REAL GUNSHOTS! C'MON!
BE QUIET, TOMMY CAN'T YOU SEE THAT I'M BUSY?

HONEST! I HEARD THEM! JUST LIKE ON TV!!
I SAID BE QUIET, TOMMY! NOW LEAVE ME ALONE SO I CAN GET THIS WORK DONE WHY DON'T YOU GO OVER THERE AND SEE WHAT HAPPENED, OKAY?



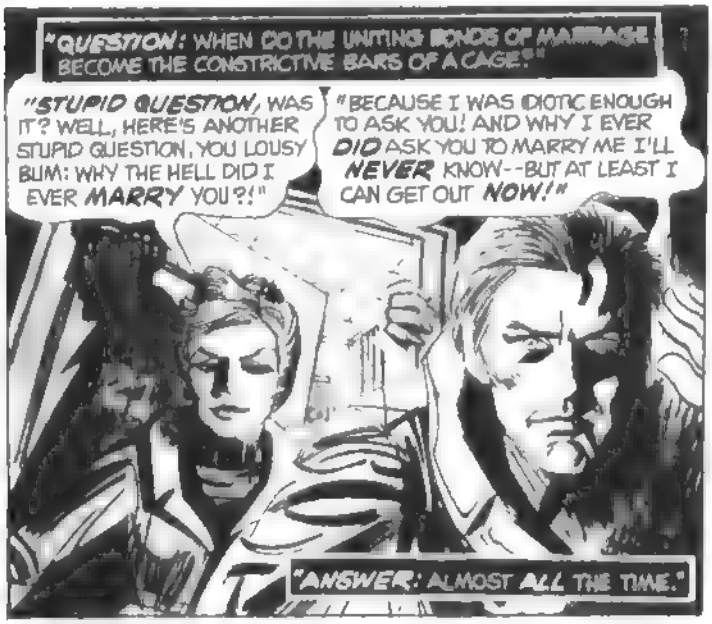
THE HORSE, A STRANGE SOUVENIR IN THE FADING AFTERNOON BUT WHAT WOULD A SMALL CHILD KNOW OF SOUVENIRS, OR A PAST THREATENED BY THE FRAGILE THREADS OF MAKE-BELIEVE. HURRY AWAY, CHILD. FOR A TIRED WORLD BREATHES ITS LAST BREATH...
I'VE HEARD OF HEADIN'EM OFF AT THE PASS, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS! OLD STURNAM SHOULD HAVE TRIED OUT FOR THE LEAD IN THE HEADLESS HORSEMAN. HE'S A NATURAL WELL, WELL, NOW I FINALLY KNOW WHAT THEY MEAN WHEN THEY SING GHOST RIDERS IN THE SKY.

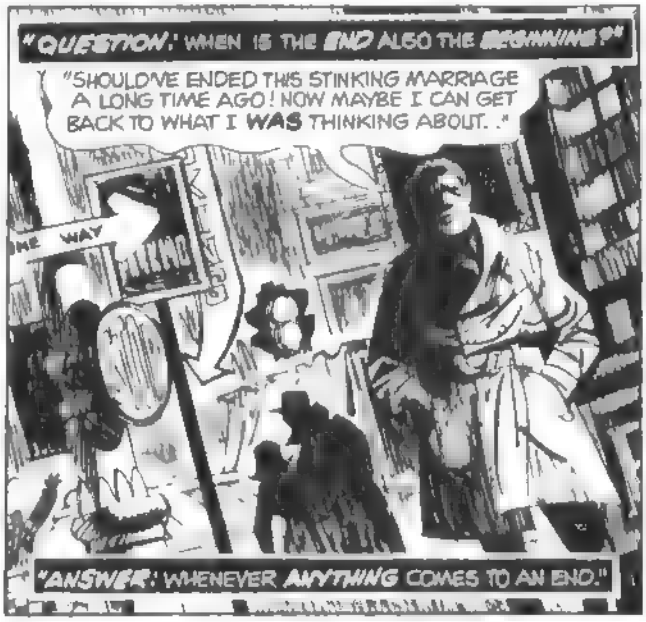
"EVERLASTING MORTALITY"

ART BY JERRY GRANDENNETTI / STORY BY DOUGLAS MOENCH

"WHAT ARE YOU THINKING ABOUT, DEAR?"
"IF I WANTED YOU TO KNOW—I'D BE TALKING INSTEAD OF THINKING."

"YOU BEAST! WHY DO YOU HAVE TO START YELLING WHENEVER I ASK A SIMPLE QUESTION?!"
"BECAUSE YOUR SO-CALLED SIMPLE QUESTIONS ARE STUPID QUESTIONS!!"


"QUESTION: WHEN DO THE UNITING BONDS OF MARRIAGE BECOME THE CONSTRICTIVE BARS OF A CAGE?"
"STUPID QUESTION, WAS IT? WELL, HERE'S ANOTHER STUPID QUESTION, YOU LOUSY BUM: WHY THE HELL DID I EVER MARRY YOU?!"
"BECAUSE I WAS IDIOTIC ENOUGH TO ASK YOU! AND WHY I EVER DID ASK YOU TO MARRY ME I'LL NEVER KNOW--BUT AT LEAST I CAN GET OUT NOW!"
"ANSWER: ALMOST ALL THE TIME."


"QUESTION: WHEN IS THE END ALSO THE BEGINNING?"
"SHOULD'VE ENDED THIS STINKING MARRIAGE A LONG TIME AGO! NOW MAYBE I CAN GET BACK TO WHAT I WAS THINKING ABOUT. ."
"ANSWER: WHENEVER ANYTHING COMES TO AN END."

"QUESTION: WHEN DOES LIFE BECOME HOPELESSLY OBSESSED WITH DEATH?"
"THERE MUST BE SOME WAY TO CHEAT DEATH! I CAN'T LET EVERYTHING I'VE GOT SLIP THROUGH MY FINGERS WHEN I DIE--
WILLED TO HER... OR A KID... OR CHARITY!"
"ANSWER: WHEN THAT LIFE RESIDES WITHIN THE WEALTHY FORM OF RON LAGNER, MIDDLE-AGED TYCOON, AVARICIOUS, SELFISH AND UNNERVINGLY DETERMINED!"

"QUESTION: WHEN MAY EVEN AN UNSWERVINGLY DETERMINED MIND BE DISTRACTED FROM ITS PROCLAIMED OBSESSIONS?"

"GOOD EVENING, SIR. MIGHT YOU BE OUT FOR SOME ENTERTAINMENT?"

"YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL. ABSOLUTELY *CAPTIVATING*...IT'S BEEN SO LONG SINCE I'VE HAD ANY REAL *FUN* WITH A WOMAN."

"ANSWER: WHEN THE DISTRACTION IS LONG-HAIRED, HAUNTINGLY FEMININE, HYPNOTICALLY BEAUTIFUL, BECKONING AND WILLING."

"I'M JUST AT THE TOP OF THE STAIRS. IT'S REALLY QUITE COMFORTABLE, SIR."

CALL ME RON. YES I'M CERTAIN IT'S VERY... NICE."

"QUESTION: WHEN ARE POLITE AMENITIES CONSCIOUSLY DISPENSED WITH?"

"LET ME TAKE YOUR RAINCOAT.. ..RON."

"WHATEVER YOU SAY, BEAUTIFUL. I HATE PLAYING GAMES."

"ANSWER: WHEN TIME MEANS MONEY AND MONEY IS TIME."

"W-WHAT ARE YOU DOING--??"

"QUESTION: AND WHEN DOES THE UNEXPECTED OCCUR?"

"YOU *BIT* ME! I'M *BLEEDING!* YOUR TEETH--*FANGS!* Y-YOU'RE A *VAMPIRE!*"

"HOW NICE OF YOU TO NOTICE. CLEVER ISN'T IT? NIGHT LENDS ITSELF PERFECTLY TO MY *NATURE!*"

"ANSWER: WHEN IT'S LEAST EXPECTED."

"QUESTION: WHEN IS DEATH *WELCOMED*?"

"*NIGHT* WORK PROVIDES ME WITH THE *BLOOD* SO VITAL TO MY EXISTENCE--AND KEEPS ME IN ENOUGH *MONEY* TO PAY THE RENT...SO I CAN REST DURING THE *DAY*, AND *YOU* ARE GOING TO GIVE ME *YOUR* BLOOD AND MONEY."

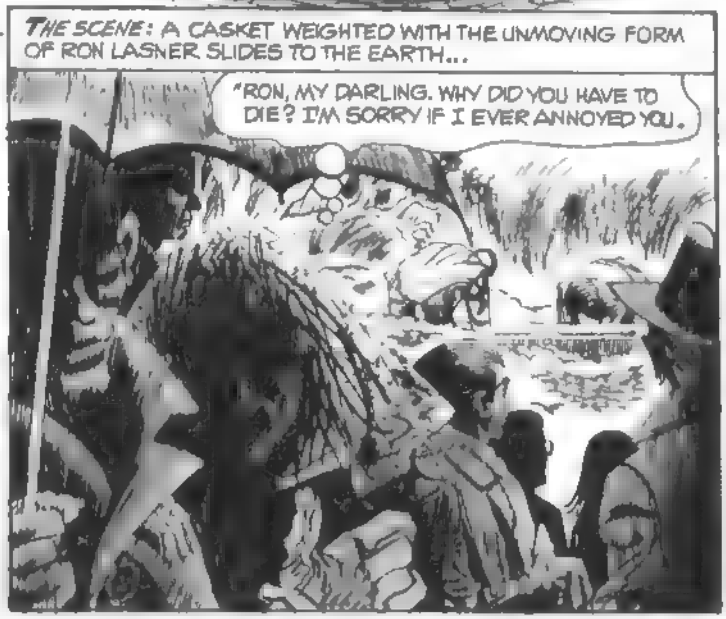
"WAIT! I'M NOT GOING TO RUN AWAY. I *WANT* YOU TO TAKE MY BLOOD--JUST LET ME GET SOME THINGS STRAIGHT. AFTER YOU DRAIN MY BLOOD I'LL TURN INTO A VAMPIRE MYSELF... RIGHT? VAMPIRES ARE *IMMORTAL*, AREN'T THEY?"

"ANSWER: WHEN THAT DEATH MEANS UNENDING LIFE."

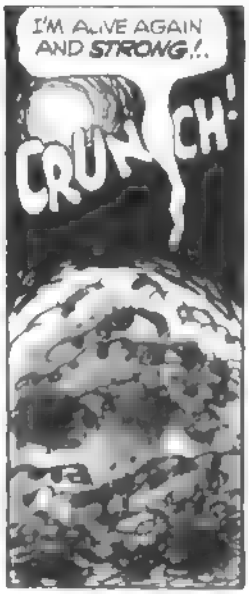
"YES, YOU WILL WALK THE EARTH FOREVER AS ONE OF THE LIVING DEAD--UNLESS YOU MEET THE SUNLIGHT OR ENCOUNTER A ZEALOUS FANATIC WITH A WOODEN STAKE OR THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS, OF COURSE."
"WELL, I'VE ALWAYS LIKED THE NIGHT BETTER, AND I'M FAR FROM RELIGIOUS. AS FOR THE STAKES, I CAN TAKE CARE OF MYSELF."

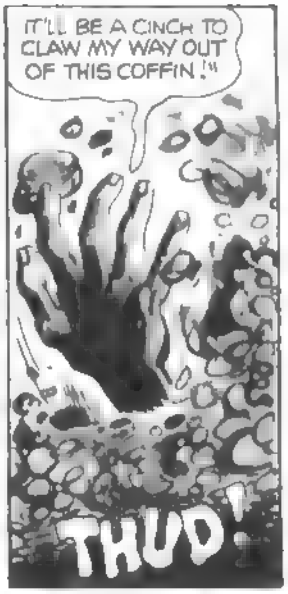
"QUESTION: WHEN DOES LOVE LEAD TO DEATH AND BEYOND LIFE?"
NOW I WILL KISS YOU--AND YOU WILL EXPERIENCE THE SWEET ECSTASY KNOWN AS DEATH...
THIS IS TOO GOOD TO BE TRUE. IN DEATH, I'LL BE FREE OF MY WIFE WITHOUT AN ANNOYING DIVORCE.
THEN SHORTLY, YOU SHALL RISE FROM THE GRAVE TO SPEND AN INFINITY OF ECSTASY WITH YOUR CHOSEN VICTIMS."
AND YET I'LL BE ABLE TO LIVE FOREVER--TO ENJOY EVERYTHING I'VE WORKED SO HARD TO GET.
"ANSWER: WHEN ONE LOVES WITH A VAMPIRESS."

A SUDDEN URGENT RINGING AT THE DOORBELL AND MRS. RONALD LASNER ANSWERS...
"YES? WHAT IS IT? IS ANYTHING WRONG?"
"MRS. LASNER? I'M AFRAID I HAVE BAD NEWS FOR YOU. WE FOUND YOUR HUSBAND IN AN ALLEY DOWNTOWN... DEAD."


THE SCENE: A CASKET WEIGHTED WITH THE UNMOVING FORM OF RON LASNER SLIDES TO THE EARTH...
"RON, MY DARLING. WHY DID YOU HAVE TO DIE? I'M SORRY IF I EVER ANNOYED YOU.

"QUESTION: WHEN SHOULD A GRAVEYARD HOUSE ONLY THE DEAD AND YET CONTAIN ONE WHO STILL LIVES?"
"IT WORKED!"
"ANSWER: AT MIDNIGHT....


I'M ALIVE AGAIN AND STRONG!.
CRUNCH!


IT'LL BE A CINCH TO CLAW MY WAY OUT OF THIS COFFIN!"
THUD!

"I'LL BE ABLE TO LIVE FOREVER--AS LONG AS I KEEP MYSELF SUPPLIED WITH BLOOD...
BLAP!
THUD!

...AND I THINK I'LL MAKE MY WIFE THE FIRST DONOR."

"QUESTION: WHEN IS A FULL-GROWN MAN NOT AN ADULT?"
"GREAT! NOW ALL I HAVE TO DO IS STAY AWAY FROM SUNLIGHT--AND THE SHADOW OF THE CROSS...

AAGGHH--WHAT'S THAT? PAIN--!"
"ANSWER: WHEN HE IS REBORN IN ANOTHER INCARNATION--WHEN AS A VAMPIRE, HE IS BUT AN INFANT."

"QUESTION: WHAT IS THE FIRST THING A VAMPIRE SEES UPON EMERGING FROM HIS GRAVE?"
"AAA///EEEEE! IT CAN'T BE! IT CAN'T BE HAPPENING TO ME! I-I'M SUPPOSED TO LIVE FOREVER!
GUGGHHHAGGGHH!
THIS HEADSTONE LOVINGLY DEDICATED TO RON LASNER BY HIS WIFE
"ANSWER: THE GRAVE'S HEADSTONE--THE MARKER, USUALLY IN THE FORM OF A CROSS, A CROSS WHICH OFFERS THE VAMPIRE'S IMMORTAL LIFE A FATAL DOSE OF...MORTALITY."

EERIE'S BOOK REVIEWS

THE TIME MACHINE

by H.G. Wells
Airmont Books, 75¢ 126 Pages

When this reviewer first saw George Pal's film, THE TIME MACHINE, he was spellbound, and straightaway got the book, and was jolted by the unexpected death by fire of Weena, that gentle girl of the far future who befriends the Time Traveler. There are other (less traumatic) differences between book and film that make the book fresh reading for all

Published in 1895 it was H G Wells's first novel. It astounded everyone then, and some now rate it as his greatest science fiction classic. Wells was truly a thinking man, and his novels were as much of ideas and reflections as they were fantastic adventure, but he was first and last a story-weaving writer His hero journeys to the far future to find a perfect society He finds instead humanity degenerated into two species—cannibalistic, ugly, subterranean mechanistic Morlocks, and then refined-looking but quite dumb, sheeplike and soft-living Eloi, who dwell on Earth's pastoral surface

I won't declare that H G Wells's books solidly ground one in History, Anthropology and Sociology but they don't hurt. H G had a common sense way of making complicated ideas crystal clear The whole point of THE TIME MACHINE is one sentence "There is no intelligence where there is no change and no need to change." How Wells went about showing it, is where the wonder begins

THE INVISIBLE MAN

by H.G. Wells
Airmont Books, 75¢ 157 Pages

At first, novelist Herbert George Wells spun at least one sci-fi yarn per year as well as yards of normal fiction of a lighthearted turn, about average English people of his time. His 1898 novel of tragicomedy and mystery, THE INVISIBLE MAN, mixed both the fantastic and the commonplace into a delightful but saddening book

To a wee English town called Bramblehurst, comes a strange visitor, whose head is always swathed in bandages and whose hands are always gloved. Odd details are slowly noticed Details like his wrists—which should be between his cuffs and gloves, but which aren't Air is, instead

H G. Wells handled this science-mystery slowly and carefully, and we only learn the Invisible Man's secret, far into the book. Humor ripples throughout the first chapters, as befuddled villagers try to find out the mysterious stranger's identity. But a vile net of circumstance tightens to a tragic end, as the lonely Invisible Man, Mr Griffin, is befriended by a helpful scientist named Dr. Kemp Kemp watches in horror as Griffin's brain degenerates, which turns him into a power-mad psychopath

Griffin's predictably inevitable death is quite dramatic and violent, indeed It's sure to leave you ill at ease, and stick to the roof of your memory

THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON

by H.G. Wells
Airmont Books, 75¢ 160 Pages

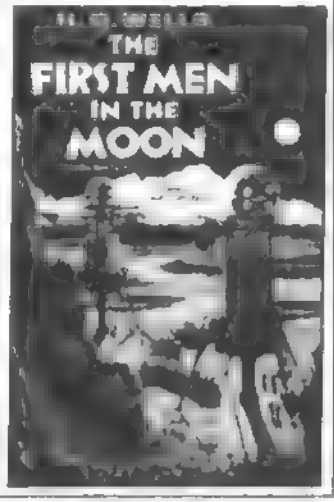
H G. Wells's big novel of 1901, THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON, is still read though its every scientific assumption has proven wrong, leaving it pure fantasy, and a darned enjoyable one at that

The "author," a Mr. Bedford, is in debt, and befriends one absent-minded Professor Cavor, who's made an anti-gravity compound, Cavorite, which avaricious Bedford intends to merchandise into a fortune. Bedford helps Cavor build a spherical vessel with Cavorite expulsion (reverse propulsion), and the two zoom moonward

The moon they land on is hardly the moon we know of. To begin with, it has oxygen And snow And plants. And huge, walruslike moon-calves And then there are the Selenites—tall blue antlike men, who have an advanced hive civilization in the moon's caverns

The whole book is such a bubblingly good-humored antique, written with such sophistication and detail that you can't help but like it Wells was to later state of his early sci-fi novels that he'd aimed not at scientific probability, but at fantasy: "Indeed, only at the same amount of conviction as one gets in a good, gripping dream." THE FIRST MEN IN THE MOON has at least that, as well as its quaint charm to recommend itself

And it really makes the reader feel that he, too, could go to the moon—albeit H G Wells's moon



IN THE DAYS OF THE COMET

By H.G. Wells
Airmont Books 75¢ 192 Pages

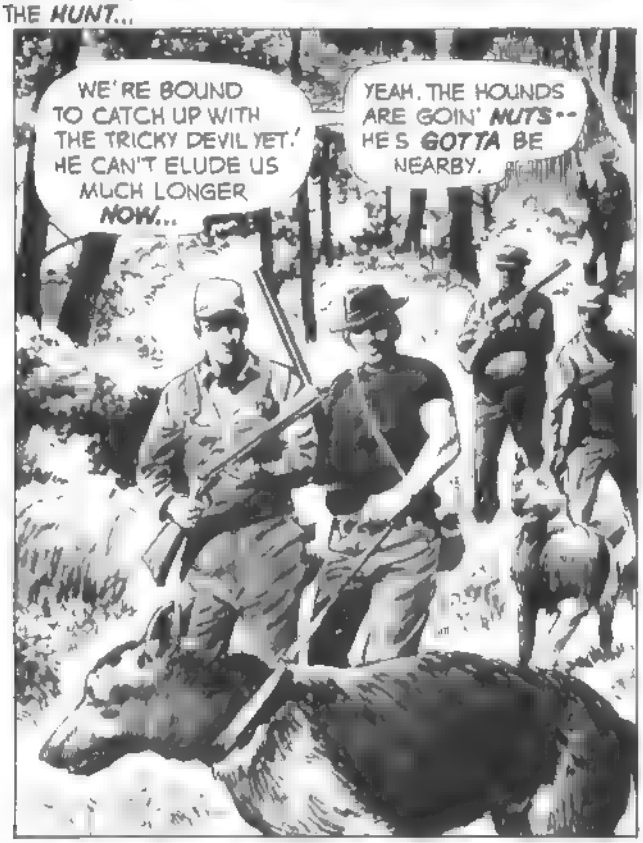
Wells wrote this one in 1906, perhaps thinking the well-publicized 1910 coming of Halley's Comet would drum up sales. Although some fanatics stood in white robes on hillsides awaiting Judgement Day, Halley's Comet passed us by, signaling nothing more ominous than Mark Twain's death Wells's fictional comet was quite different

H.G 's comet of strange green gasses collides with Earth and the vapors alter everyone's mind, seemingly to the good. It happens on the eve of a war between England and Germany (remember: 1906!), when the book's "author," William Ledford, a slum youth, tries to shoot his ex-girlfriend, and her aristocratic lover Well, when the world wakes from the comet's gasses, all mankind has a permanent case of Brotherly Love; armies quit; world leaders agree to work for a new world order, rebuilding sensibly, saying, "Let us begin afresh,"; and the hero accepts his jilting and makes friends with his former targets. And yet, Wells somehow manages to make this all wonderfully believable and desirable

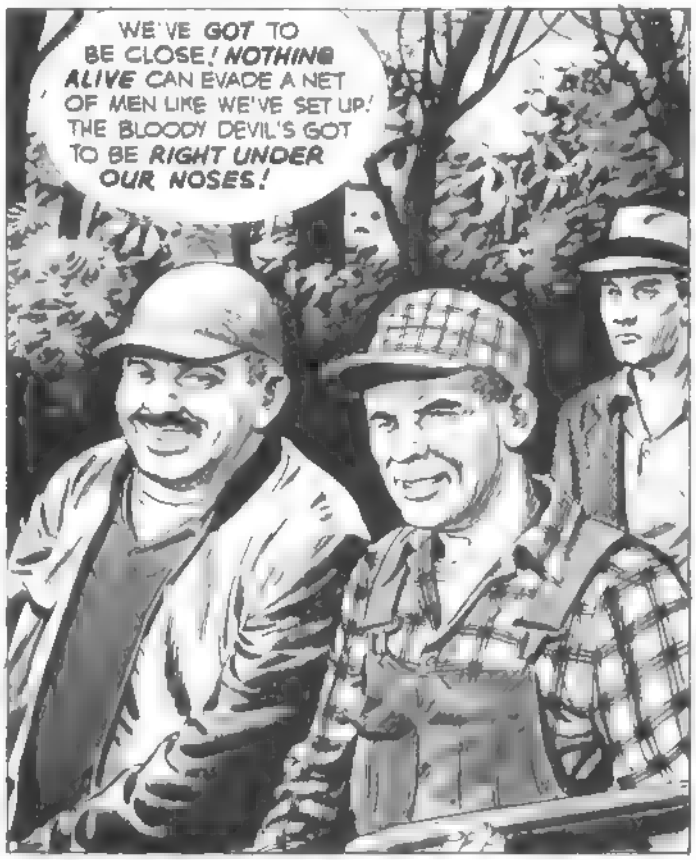
Unfortunately, one of the things done as "dustman's work" in the new world order, is the burning of cities, paintings and books Thirty years later, in Germany, Hitler did just that, minus the wisdom of a comet's vapors

REVIEWS BY CHUCK McNAUGHTON

CONSIDER THIS GROUP OF MEN: ARMED WITH SHOTGUNS AND HOUNDS, THEY HUNT INCESSANTLY... ***RUTHLESSLY.*** THEIR CLOTHES CLING TO OVERWORKED MUSCLES, STINK WITH THE SWEAT OF EXERTION. THEIR BOOTS ARE HEAVY, NECESSARY DETERRENTS TO EACH DOGGED STEP. THEIR LIMBS ARE FATIGUED FROM CONTINUOUS EFFORT. BUT THE GLEAM OF VIGILANT ANTICIPATION STILL LIGHTS THEIR EYES, WITH A FIERCENESS ATTRIBUTABLE ONLY TO THE ***HUNT...***



CONSIDER THESE DETERMINED HUNTERS: IS IT ABSURD TO EQUATE THEIR SINISTER PURPOSE WITH THE EXCITEMENT WHICH IMPELS YOUNG CHILDREN ON A MOCK TREASURE HUNT? TRUE, A ***LIFE*** IS HERE AT STAKE -- BUT ISN'T THE LIFE OF THE ***PREY*** ALWAYS SUBORDINATE TO THE INTERESTS OF THE ***PREDATORS?*** AND HASN'T THE ATAVISTIC PLEASURE OF PURSUIT AND CAPTURE ALWAYS BEEN... A ***GAME?***

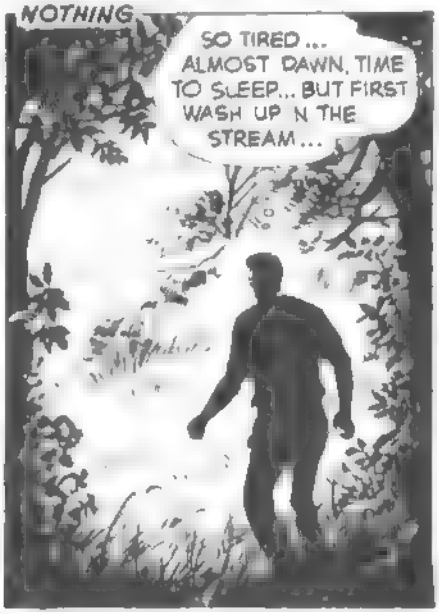


YES, CONSIDER THESE MEN OLIVER WILLIS. THEY ARE HUNTERS, AND THEY ATTEND TO THEIR CRAFT WITH RELENTLESS PRECISION. THEIR METHODS ARE EXEMPLARY, CARRIED OUT PUNCTILIOUSLY... TO AN ADMIRABLE DEGREE. BUT YOU ***DON'T*** ADMIRE THESE DILIGENT HUNTERS... FOR THEY ARE ON A ***MANHUNT*** -- AND THEIR PREY IS ***YOU.*** YOU, AND YOU ***ALONE,*** PROVIDE...

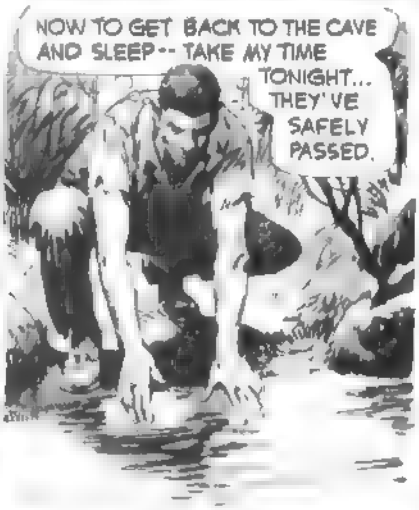
THE THRILL OF THE HUNT

ART BY MARTIN SALVADOR / STORY BY DOUGLAS MOENCH

YOU'VE ESCAPED THEM FOR A WHILE, OLIVER WILLIS. YOU'VE OBSERVED THEM -- YOU KNOW THEY MOVE IN FLANKS OF CONCENTRIC ARCS, THAT THEY'VE ***PASSED*** YOU AGAIN TONIGHT -- THAT WHEN THEY CONVERGE ON THE CENTRAL POINT THEY'LL FIND... ***NOTHING***



THE WATER IS COOL AS YOU CLEANSE THE FETID ANIMAL DUNG FROM YOUR FACE AND TATTERED CLOTHING. ONCE AGAIN, THE ODOROUS SUBSTANCE HAS SERVED ITS PURPOSE, TO DECEIVE THE STUPID HOUNDS -- BUT YOU WONDER HOW LONG IT CAN GO ON... YOU WISH YOU HAD A RAZOR TO RELIEVE YOUR FACE OF ITS ITCHING STUBBLE...



THE BRUTAL SOUND OF DISCOVERY EXPLODES ABRUPTLY FROM BEHIND YOU. YOU LURCH BACK FROM THE BULLET'S SPLASH, LIKE A CURIOUS KITTEN WHO HAS SINGED ITS WHISKERS ON A FLAME...

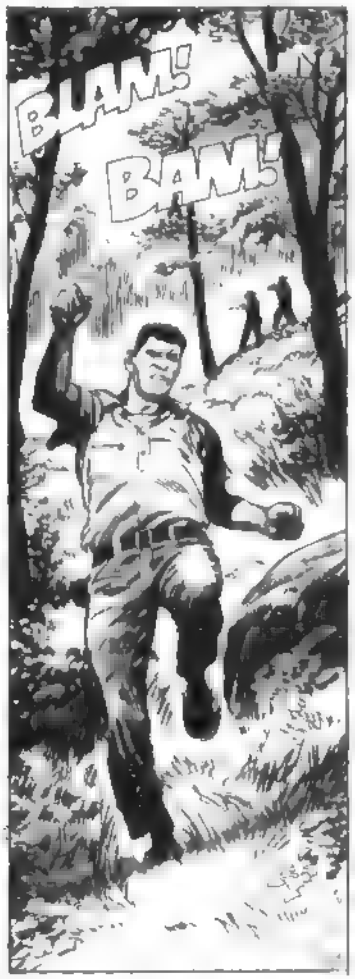
AND YOU RUN. GOD, HOW YOU RUN! THE BULLETS SCREAM PAST YOUR EARS, SHRILL INVECTIVES HURLED AT ***YOU***, THE FACELESS QUARRY..

YOU'RE THE CREATURE IN THE DISGUISE OF A MAN, THE FRANTIC DANCER IN THE MIDNIGHT, CONTROLLED BY THE MERCILESS PUPPET STRINGS OF YOUR SITUATION.. YOU DIVE OVER THE PRECIPICE ONTO THE PEBBLE-STREWN GRADIENT..

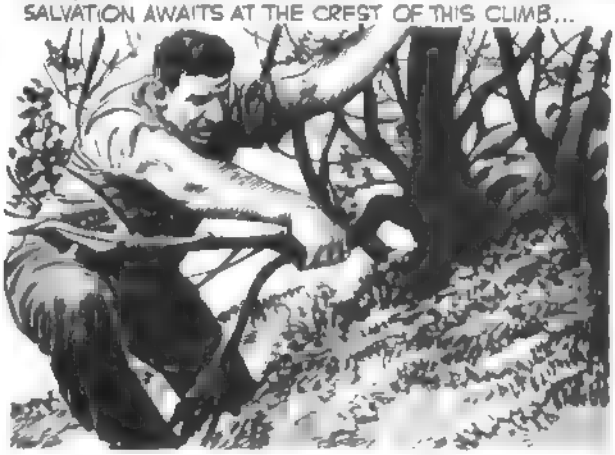
..AND SLIDE, HEEDLESS OF THE CHOKING DUST AND THE ABRASIVE BURNS TO YOUR TORTURED FLESH, DOWN INTO THE RAGGED GULLY...

THE SPATTERING HAIL OF GUNSHOTS ATTESTS TO THE PRESENCE OF YOUR HUNTERS, TOPPING THE SUMMIT BEHIND YOU. THE HOWL OF THE DOGS IS MADDENING YOU PICK UP YOUR BATTERED FORM AND YOU FLEE...

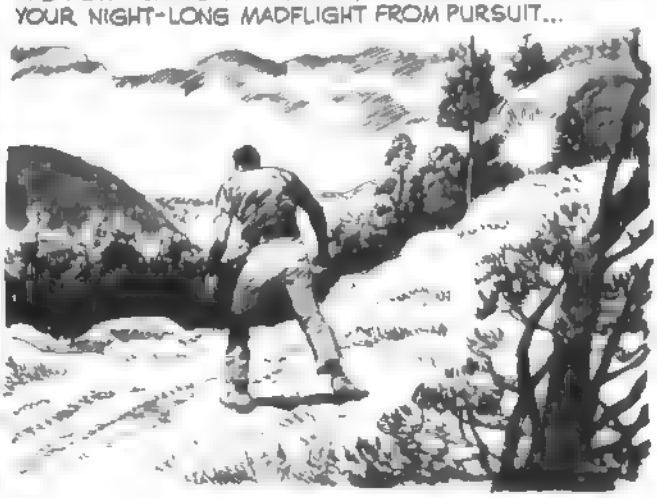
YOU KNOW THIS TERRAIN WELL, OLIVER WILLIS. YOU'VE LIVED HERE ALL YOUR LIFE. THIS GULLY IS AS FAMILIAR AS THE LIFE-LINE ETCHED ON YOUR PALM. YOU PRAY, FERVENTLY, THAT YOU CAN REACH THE TURN AHEAD... BEFORE THE LIFE-LINE ***TERMINATES***...



THE GUNSHOTS CEASE IN A VACUUM OF SILENCE AS YOU ROUND THE BEND AND BEGIN YOUR SCRAMBLE UP THE CRAGGY SIDE OF THE GULLY. EONS OF WEATHER HAVE ERODED THE SOIL AND THE WIRY TREE-ROOTS CUT INTO YOUR PALMS. YOU WINCE AT THE PAIN, BUT TAKE SUCCOR IN THAT FACT THAT TEMPORARY SALVATION AWAITS AT THE CREST OF THIS CLIMB...



YOU AND DAWN COMPLETE YOUR STRUGGLES TO THE HORIZON SIMULTANEOUSLY. TWO SUNS GREET YOU ON THE DEW-BLANKETED PLATEAU, SIGNALING THE END OF YOUR NIGHT-LONG MADFLIGHT FROM PURSUIT...



YOU SLIDE THE HUGE MIRROR ASIDE, CURSING NATURE'S CAPRICE THAT SHE SHOULD SITUATE THIS CAVE FACING THE EAST. IT WOULD NOT DO TO HAVE THEM COME UPON THIS SPOT AT DAWN. IT WOULD NOT DO TO HAVE THEM DISCOVER ***TWO SUNS***...

YOU DRAG THE MIRROR BACK IN POSITION. YOU ARE HUNGRY, AND THANKFUL FOR YOUR KNOWLEDGE OF HERBS AND BERRIES -- MANY SPECIMENS IN THIS REGION ARE POISONOUS, DECEPTIVELY WAITING TO AID THE HUNTERS IN THE LETHAL PRECIPITATION OF YOUR DEATH...

THEN, LIKE ALL NOCTURNAL CREATURES, YOU PREPARE TO SLEEP THE DAY. BUT FIRST -- YOUR MIND IS REST VE -- YOU THINK. YOU TOLERATE BITTER THOUGHTS -- THEY ARE ALL YOU HAVE. YOU CONTEMPLATE CIRCUMSTANCES AND RAMIFICATIONS AND CONTINGENCIES... IN SHORT YOU REFLECT UPON THE ***PAST...***

YOU REMEMBER THE DAY THEY PULLED UP. IT WAS A BEAUTIFUL, CLEAR DAY -- THE AIR CRISP, THE WIND STRONG. YOUR WORK WAS DONE FOR THE WEEK. YOU PLANNED TO TAKE A WALK BY THE STREAM, PERHAPS TOSS A FEW STONES INTO THE GULLY, MAYBE DO A LITTLE FISHING... BUT FIRST YOU HAD TO SEE WHAT THEY WANTED...

YOU DIDN'T LIKE THEIR ATTITUDE -- YOU DIDN'T LIKE THEIR POWER LINES -- YOU DIDN'T LIKE THEM INTERFERING WITH YOUR BEAUTIFUL DAY...

YOU DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY HE'D REACHED INTO HIS INSIDE BREAST POCKET...

YOU DIDN'T LIKE THE WAY HE'D REACHED INTO HIS POCKET AT ALL SO YOU SHOT HIM

NO ONE'S GONNA CUT DOWN MY TREES-- AND I WON'T BE INTIMIDATED BY YOUR GUNS EITHER!

GOOD LORD--!

BA-LAM!

YOU'D DISCHARGED BOTH BARRELS IN YOUR FLASH OF RAGE -- YOUR SHOTGUN WAS USELESS. THE OTHER ONE MUST'VE HAD A GUN TOO -- YOU FLED IN PANIC...

YOU FLED FROM THE TWO MEN WHO SOUGHT TO KILL YOU AND YOUR TREES... AND YOU TOOK UP YOUR FORAGING EXISTENCE IN THE DENSE WOODS YOU KNEW SO WELL..

AND THEY'D COME FOR YOU THAT NIGHT -- THE ELECTRIC COMPANY'S HIRED CREW OF SADISTIC MANHUNTERS, THE MANHUNTERS YOU'VE ELUDED FOR SIXTEEN DAYS AND NIGHTS NOW...

YOU'RE SAFE FOR THE DAY WITHIN YOUR INVIOLABLE CAVE -- THE MIRROR WILL INTERCEPT AND REPEL THE OUTSIDE WORLD AND ITS ROVING HUNTERS. AND IN THE NIGHT YOU WILL VENTURE OUT ON ANOTHER SCAVENGER EXCURSION, SMEARED WITH DUNG AND CLOAKED IN SHADOWS... BUT YOU'RE WEARY NOW, HAGGARD. YOU SLEEP.

...TO BE AWAKENED BY THE MUFFLED SOUNDS OF THE HUNTERS BEYOND YOUR MIRROR. THEY ARE COMING CLOSER. YOU DON'T WISH TO BE TRAPPED WITHIN THE INESCAPABLE CUL-DE-SAC OF YOUR CAVE...

SO YOU LEAVE, NOTING WITH WRY SATISFACTION THAT DARKNESS HAS DESCENDED. AT LEAST THEY HAVEN'T INTRUDED UPON YOUR SLEEP...

YOUR BREATH HALTS HALF-WAY TO YOUR LUNGS AS THE HUNTERS APPROACH YOUR CAVE--BUT THEY DON'T **KNOW**...YET.

HOW THE DEVIL HE DOES IT IS BEYOND ME! OVER **TWO WEEKS** HE'S MANAGED TO SURVIVE IN THESE WOODS! WE'VE COMBED EVERY INCH OF THE AREA--WHERE DOES HE **SLEEP?**

BEATS ME DON'T SEEM **HUMAN**, DOES HE?

YOU CHUCKLE IN SPITE OF YOUR FURY AS ONE OF THE HUNTERS WALKS STRAIGHT INTO...

A **MIRROR**--?! WHAT THE--? BASHED MY NOSE **GOOD** LOOKED LIKE JUST MORE TREES...

PUSH THE MIRROR ASIDE--I'LL BET HOUNDS TO HONEYSUCKLE OUR ANSWER S BEHIND THE MIRROR.

THIS IS IT, ALL RIGHT. HE MUST SLEEP IN THIS CAVE DURING THE DAY. WELL, WE'LL FIX HIM NOW--STATION MEN IN THE BUSHES AROUND THE CAVE AND CATCH HIM AT DAWN WHEN HE RETURNS.

THE FOOLS--FAT CHANCE I'LL RETURN **NOW**. ALL THEY'VE DONE IS **INCONVENIENCE** ME--BUT I'LL SURVIVE--I'LL ESCAPE THEIR NET AND GET TO THE AUTHORITIES. TELL THEM OF THIS.

YOU MELT INTO THE WOODS, STEALTHILY, STOPPING TO GROVEL AND SCROUNGE FOR TUBERS AND BERRIES, BEETLES, ANYTHING TO SUSTAIN YOUR PRIMITIVE EXISTENCE...

BUT IN THE SUCCEEDING DAYS AND NIGHTS, THE EFFECTS OF PROLONGED EXPOSURE TO THE HOSTILE ELEMENTS BEGIN TO CLAIM THEIR INEVITABLE TOLL...

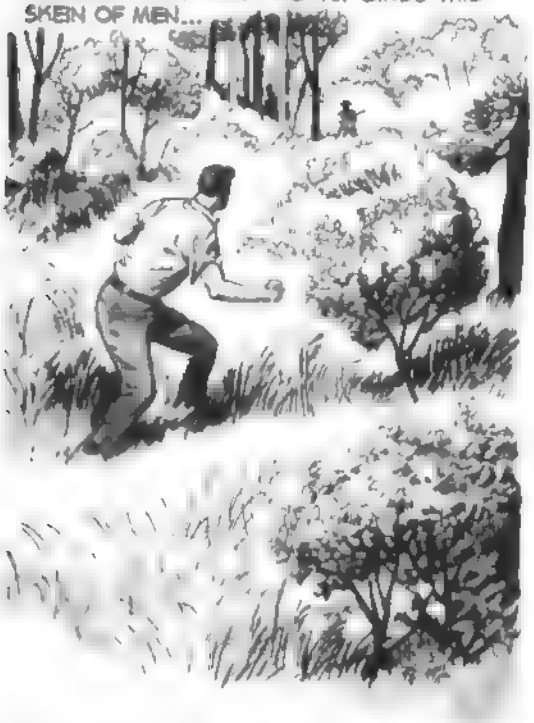
KOFF-KAUCK-KOFF ÷SNIF÷

UNTIL FINALLY YOU ARE WEAK, AND TIRED... AND **SURROUNDED.**

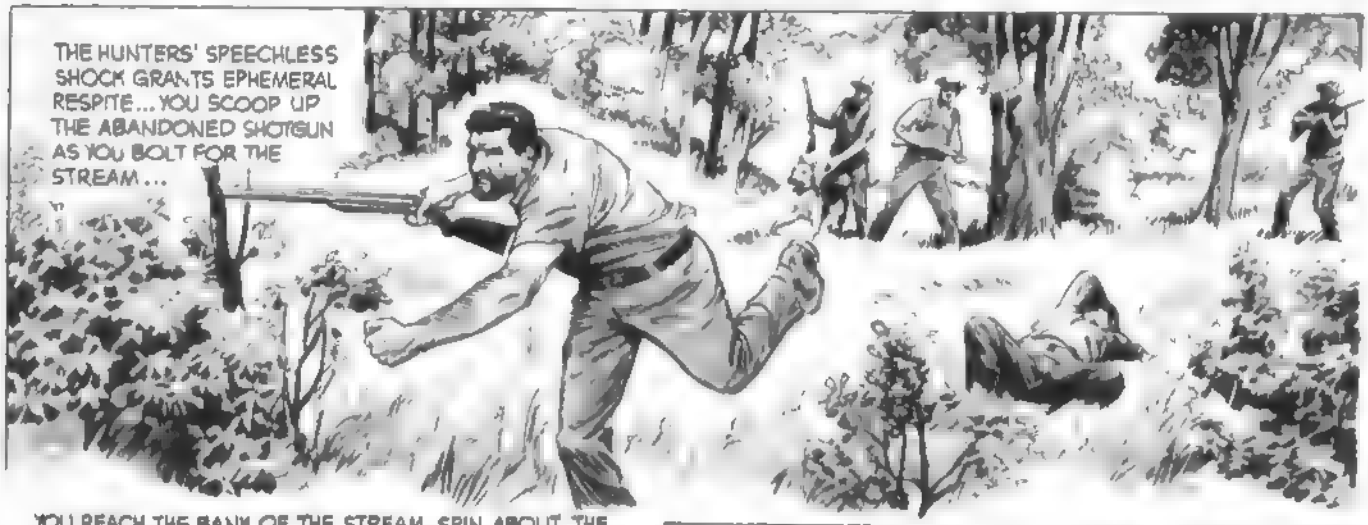
ALL RIGHT, MEN, WE'VE GOT HIM NOW--HE MUST BE IN THE MIDDLE SOMEWHERE. THE DOGS'LL FLUSH HIM OUT.

YIP YIPE

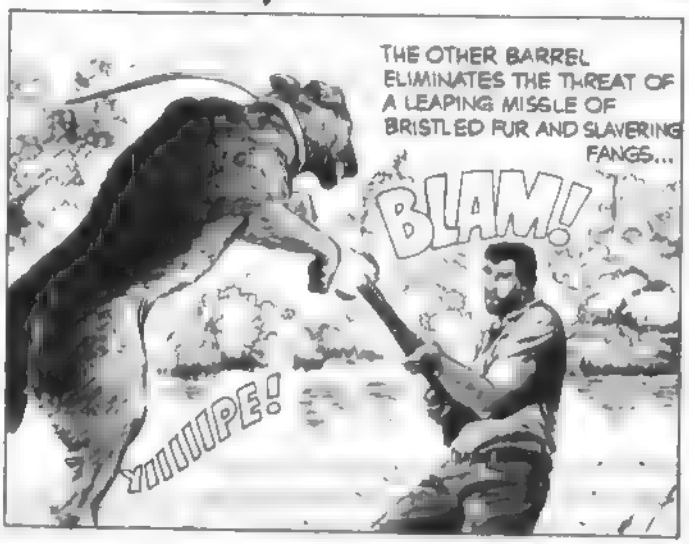
YIP YIP YIP WHE



BUT DESPERATE HOPELESSNESS MANIFESTS ITSELF IN A RESURGENCE OF STRENGTH AND YOUR HURLED STONE FINDS ITS MARK...



YOU REACH THE BANK OF THE STREAM, SPIN ABOUT. THE FIRST BARREL TAKES CARE OF THE LOUD-MOUTHED ONE...



CLUTCHING THE USELESS SHOTGUN, YOU DUCK TO EVADE THE HURTLING CORPSE OF THE DOG...
GET HIM--!! THAT WAS MY PRIZE HOUND!
PLASH!

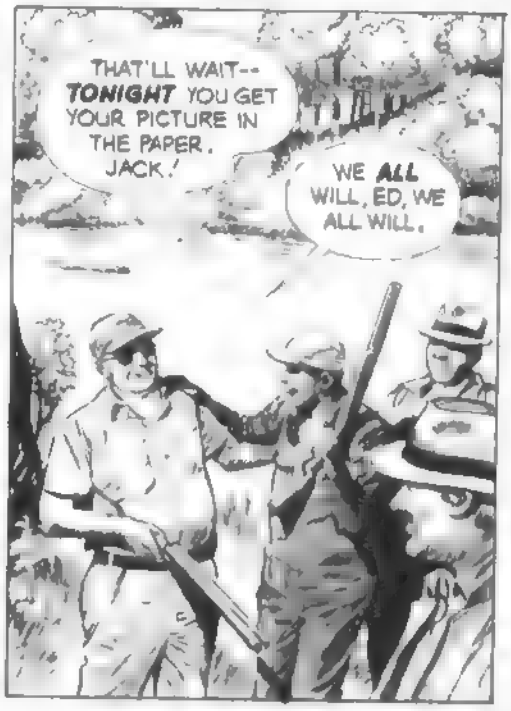
INFURIATED BEYOND CONSTRAINT, YOU SLING THE SHOTGUN AT THE NEAREST HUNTER, CRUSHING HIS BRITTLE CHIN..
CHWONK!
DAMN IT, GET HIM- MUUUUHNNN!

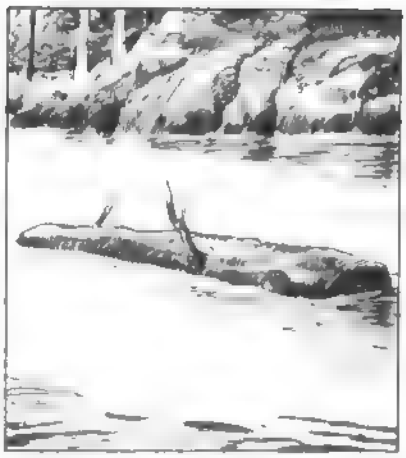
IT IS LESS THAN FUTILE NOW--YOU TWIST TO DIVE INTO THE STREAM... AND...

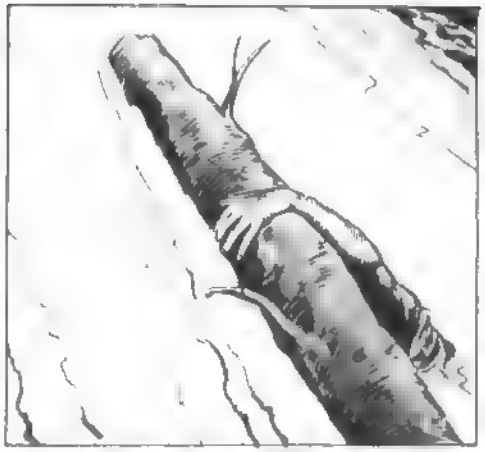
BLAM!

YOU GOT 'IM, JACK! NICE SHOOTING! IT WAS BEAUTIFUL!
THANKS. USED BOTH BARRELS -- JUST TO BE SURE!
PLOOOSHO

YOU MADE SURE, ALL RIGHT. HE'S ONE FISH THAT WON'T BE COMIN' UP FOR AIR -- YOU NAILED 'IM REAL GOOD...
YEAH. HAVE TO DRAG THE STREAM FOR THE BODY TOMORROW...


THAT'LL WAIT-- TONIGHT YOU GET YOUR PICTURE IN THE PAPER, JACK!
WE ALL WILL, ED, WE ALL WILL.

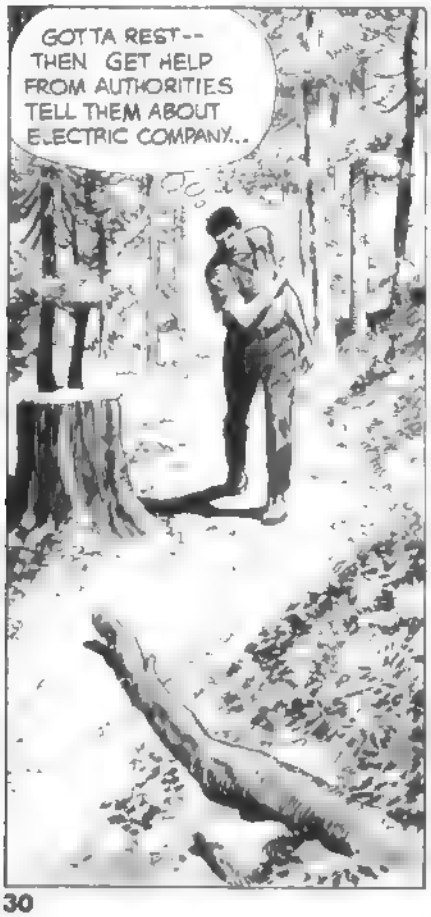




THE CHILL WATERS **CHEW** AT YOUR WOUND. YOU'VE LOST A LOT OF BLOOD, BUT..

AT LEAST... STILL ALIVE... THANK GOD THE LOG HAD A HOLE IN IT... SO I COULD BREATHE... GOTTA GET BACK TO CAVE, REST... THEY MUST'VE LEFT BY NOW ...THINKING I'M DEAD...

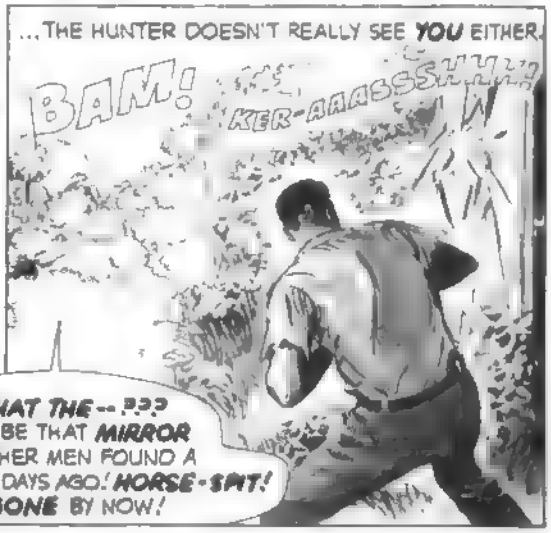
YOU STAGGER-- **CRAWL** -- **INCH** YOUR ERRATIC WAY TOWARDS THE CAVE, LEAVING A THICK TRAIL OF CRIMSON BEHIND YOU...



YOU DON'T SEE THE CONCEALED HUNTER...

...BUT IT'S ALL RIGHT BECAUSE...

...THE HUNTER DOESN'T REALLY SEE **YOU** EITHER.



YOUR VAUNTED RESOURCEFULNESS DWINDLES IN DIZZY PROPORTION TO YOUR FADING WILL TO LIVE. YOU DON'T KNOW HOW YOU MANAGED TO SCALE TREACHEROUS BRANCHES -- BUT YOU'RE SAFE... FOR A ***WHILE***.

DON'T THE SHERIFF'S MEN ***KNOW*** WHAT'S HAPPENING --? THAT A MAN IS BEING HARASSED AND HUNTED -- LIKE AN ***ANIMAL*** --? WHERE ***ARE*** THEY?

HUNTERS COMING AGAIN -- WON'T ***EVER*** LEAVE ME ALONE ..

YOU BECOME FILLED WITH FEEBLE ELATION AS THE FORMS DRAW NEARER, BECOME DISCERNABLE...

SHERIFF'S MEN! THANK GOD -- THEY'VE FINALLY COME... TO RESCUE ME... GOTTA GET DOWN... TELL THEM... I'M WOUNDED... BEING HUNTED... GET THEM TO STOP THE HUNTERS...

YOU SHIFT YOUR BODY, ATTEMPTING TO DESCEND FROM YOUR LEAFY PERCH, AND THE SUDDEN MOVEMENT REOPENS YOUR WOUND. YOU FEEL THE HOT WETNESS GUSHING FROM YOUR SIDE. YOU FLAIL OUT FOR THE NEAREST MEANS OF SUPPORT, BUT IT IS INADEQUATE... IT ***DOESN'T*** SUPPORT YOU -- IT'S BEEN FRAYED, ***WEAKENED*** BY CONSTANT RUBBING AGAINST THE TREE BRANCHES. YOU FALL, OLIVER WILLIS... BUT YOU'RE OBLIVIOUS -- YOU'RE ***DEAD*** BEFORE YOU HIT THE GROUND...

BAM BAM BAM

IT'S ***HIM*** --! SHOOT TO ***KILL*** -- HE'S ***DANGEROUS***!

WELL, WE FINALLY GOT HIM -- SAVED THE COUNTY HIS EXECUTION EXPENSES...

YEAH, BUT THIS CABLE'LL NEED TO BE REPAIRED..

OKAY, MEN. YOU'VE BEEN A GREAT HELP -- A SHERIFF COULDN'T HOPE FOR A BETTER VIGILANTE POSSE. GO HOME TO YOUR FAMILIES NOW... THE MANHUNT'S OVER...

CR-RR-RACK-ILS-SPUT!

END

ART BY DUBE / STORY BY DOUGLAS MOENCH

THE TRAILER IS *BARREN*, SAVE FOR THE RICKETY TABLE AND A DECK OF FRAYED CARDS... AND A GLOOMY PLANE OF *SHADOW* MASKING THE MUSTY WALLS...

COME ON, CHIK! THERE'S *NO ONE* IN HERE! PROBABLY OUT HAVING THEIR CRYSTAL BALLS *SIMONIZED!*

NO! WAIT A MINUTE, HARRY! I CAN *FEEL* SOMEONE HERE! AND WE'RE HERE, SO WE'LL HAVE OUR *FORTUNES* TOLD!

...SHADOW IS THE DWELLING PLACE OF THE *FRIGHTENED*... OR THE *MYSTERIOUS*..!

GOOD EVENING, GENTLEMEN! MY COMPLIMENTS TO YOUR *COURAGE!* NOT MANY ARE POSSESSED OF A WILL WITH STRENGTH ENOUGH TO DARE DEFYING THE *FUTURE* AND ITS UNKNOWN FATES!

GET A LOAD OF *THIS!* YOU REALLY GO THE WHOLE CLICHÉ ROUTE, DON'T YOU? YOU LOOK LIKE YOU'VE HAD *PLASTIC SURGERY* MODELED ON AN OLD MARIA OUSPENSKYA MOVIE STILL!

PLEASE BE SEATED, GENTLEMEN! WE WILL ENLIST THE AID OF THE *TAROT CARDS!*

I CANNOT GUARANTEE THE RESULTS, BUT I *MUST* ASSURE YOU THAT THEY ARE SELDOM *EXPECTED!*

THE STEADILY INCESSANT SPATTER OF RAIN AGAINST THE TIN ROOF IS INTERRUPTED ONLY BY SIBILANT WHISPERS, HOARSE IN THE *GLOOM*...

THERE AIN'T A *CHANCE* WE WON'T LIKE OUR FUTURES! BESIDES, THIS *TAROT* MALARKEY IS JUST CHEAP *TRICKERY!*

WE SHALL *SEE*, GENTLEMEN! NOW EACH OF YOU MUST *SHUFFLE* THE DECK AND LAY IT ON THE TABLE USING THE HAND *CLOSEST* TO YOUR *HEART!*

WHEW! I DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH OF THIS I CAN *TAKE!*

THE CARDS, WORN WITH TIME AND SOGGY WITH HUMIDITY, RIPPLE LIMPLY AND ARE LAID ON THE TABLE WITH A LEFT HAND WHICH FAILS TO CONCEAL ITS *TREMBLING*...

QUIET, HARRY! STOP THE RIDICULING AND GIVE THE OLD LADY A *CHANCE!*

...AGED HANDS, BUT HANDS WHICH, ALTHOUGH GNARLED WITH ARTHRITIC STIFFNESS, HANDLE THE CARDS WITH A SUPPLE FAMILIARITY!

I SEE YOUR FATES TO BE INEXTRICABLY *ENTWINED!* YOU ARE BROTHERS, BUT YOUR COMMON EXPERIENCES HAVE EXTENDED FAR!

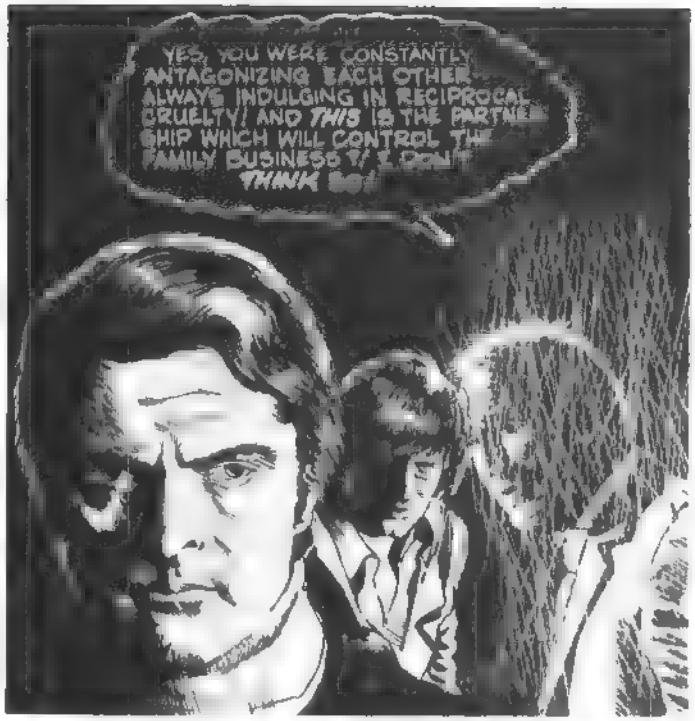
YOU HAVE BEEN INVOLVED IN A *SHARED* ENTERPRISE WHICH WILL SOON BRING YOU FABULOUS *WEALTH!*

YOU BETTER *BELIEVE* IT! AND WE'RE GOING TO AGGRANDIZE OUR HOLDINGS THROUGH MUTUAL INVESTMENTS... BUT HOW DID *YOU* KNOW WE WERE COMING INTO *MONEY?!*

THE ANCIENT CRONE SMILES ENIGMATICALLY THROUGH YELLOWED TEETH, BUT THE SIGNIFICANCE OF HER WORDS IS EXPLICIT...
THE TAROT KNOWS ALL, GENTLEMEN! IT KNOWS THAT JEALOUSY WILL SOON FIGURE PROMINENTLY IN YOUR LIVES!
IMPOSSIBLE! WE'LL BE SHARING THE WEALTH EQUALLY! HOW CAN WE BE JEALOUS OF EACH OTHER--?
SHUT UP, HARRY! SHOW US ANOTHER CARD, WOMAN!
ARE YOU CERTAIN YOU WISH TO SEE THE NEXT CARD? SOMETIMES IT IS BETTER NOT TO KNOW!
PUT IT DOWN, GYPSIE! WE DON'T NEED ANY OF YOUR MELODRAMATIC SPEECHES!
DEATH, WITH HIS INEXORABLE SCYTHE, SHALL REAP THE HARVEST OF YOUR LIVES!
DEATH
SO TELL US SOMETHING WE DON'T KNOW! EVERYONE KICKS OFF, WHETHER IT'S AS GRIMLY POETIC AS YOU PHRASE IT OR NOT!
YES, ALL WHO LIVE MUST DIE! BUT YOU--BOTH OF YOU--ARE MARKED FOR IMMEDIATE DEATH! AND A HORRIBLE DEATH IT SHALL BE! ...NO PEACE, AND NO COMFORT OF ETERNAL
"CRIMSON HELL-FIRES SHALL LEAP AND CACKLE ABOUT YOUR BARED SOULS, RELENTLESSLY, WITH NO SURCEASE--NO SUPPLICATION FROM THE SEARING AGONY!"
YOU SHALL WRITHE AND SHRIEK IN INEFFABLE TORMENT, SUFFERING THE MYSTIC AND MERCILESS RETRIBUTION WHICH IS YOUR DUE! THE CONSUMMATE PUNISHMENT OF RAGING CONFLAGRATION...!

THAT'S CRAZY! I DON'T BELIEVE IT! I WON'T LISTEN TO ANY MORE OF IT! COME ON, CHIK, LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
WAIT A MINUTE, HARRY! TAKE IT EASY! THIS IS ONLY A CARNIVAL, REMEMBER? YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO RELAX AND ENJOY GETTING SCARED!
PERHAPS YOU GENTLEMEN WOULD LIKE TO FORGET THE TAROT CARDS' A SEANCE, ON THE OTHER HAND, MIGHT PROVE EMINENTLY ENLIGHTENING...!
PERHAPS A HORRIBLE FASCINATION, OR JUST MORBID CURIOSITY EMBUES THE BROTHERS TO ACQUIESE TO THE GYPSY'S SUGGESTION!
THIS HAS GOT TO BE ALL PHONEY HOCUS-POCUS, BUT WE'LL GO ALONG WITH IT!
THERE MUST BE ABSOLUTE SILENCE IF WE ARE TO COMMUNE WITH ONE OF THE DEAD-- IF WE ARE TO SUMMON THE PRESENCE OF A DISCARNATE INTELLIGENCE!
THE PERVADING HUSH OF SILENCE AND THE SUFFUSED PATTER OF RAIN ACCOMPANIES AN EERIE TRANSITION IN THE GYPSY'S CALM DEMEANOR-- HER HEAD TILTS AS IF MESMERIZED AND HER EYELIDS BEGIN TO FLUTTER WHILE SHE MURMERS...
SOON! SOON WE WILL BE BE VISITED BY A BEING CLOSE TO YOU...
THEN THE VERY AIR BEGINS TO SWIRL AND EDDY AS IF IN A NONEXISTANT WIND FUNNEL, AND BEGINS TO TAKE ON A VISIBLE, ETHREALITY...
GOOD LORD! IT CAN'T BE! IT'S...
...DAD!
YES, CHIK... HARRY! IT'S ME! AND I AM DEAD--AS YOU WELL KNOW! NOW YOU, MY SONS, MUST CARRY ON THE FAMILY TRADITION...
...MAINTAIN THE EMPIRE I WORKED SO HARD BUILDING! I DEEPLY HOPE YOU WON'T DISCREDIT THE FAMILY NAME...
...BUT I FEAR THAT MY HOPES ARE FUTILE!

EVEN AS CHILDREN YOU FOUGHT VICIOUSLY! OVER A TOY, A WORD SPOKEN IN CRUEL JEST, WHAT DOES IT MATTER? YOU WERE AT EACH OTHER'S THROATS ALWAYS!


YES, YOU WERE CONSTANTLY ANTAGONIZING EACH OTHER— ALWAYS INDULGING IN RECIPROCAL CRUELTY! AND THIS IS THE PARTNERSHIP WHICH WILL CONTROL THE FAMILY BUSINESS?! I DON'T THINK SO!

AND YOU, CHIK! DO YOU REMEMBER THE TIME YOU CAME HOME EARLY FROM BASKETBALL PRACTICE ONLY TO DISCOVER YOUR GIRL IN HARRY'S ARMS? YOU NEVER FORGAVE HIM FOR THAT...!

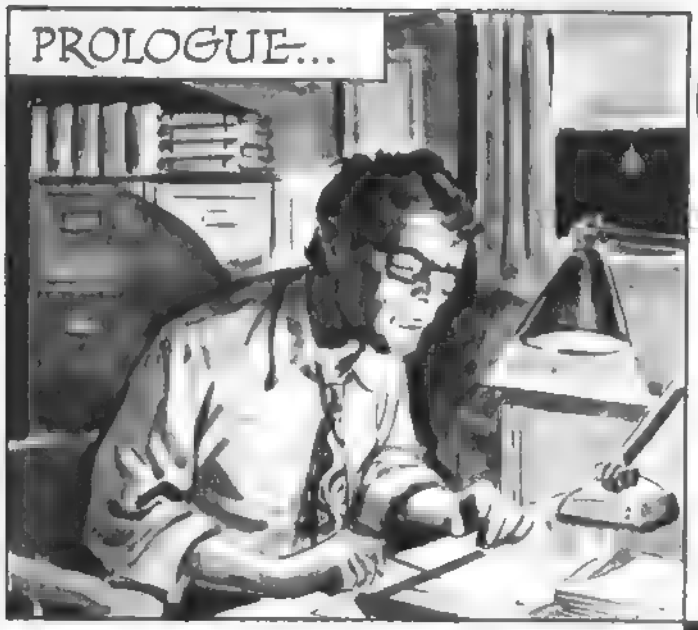
B... BUT THAT WAS SO LONG AGO! I THOUGHT YOU HAD... FORGOTTEN!

HOW COULD I FORGET THAT? SHE WAS THE FIRST GIRL I EVER LOVED! I STILL HAVEN'T FORGIVEN YOU FOR THAT HARRY!
I REALLY OUGHT TO...

YOU'LL DO NOTHING! LITTLE BROTHER OR NOT, I COULD ALWAYS HOLD MY OWN UP TO YOU...
UGNN..!

JUST LIKE OLD TIMES, EH HARRY! STILL FIGHTING YOUR BROTHER!
IT'S TOO LATE TO CHANGE YOUR WAYS NOW! NO DOUBT THE FAMILY BUSINESS WILL SUCCUMB TO SORDID ATROCITIES AT YOUR HANDS!

AND IT'S ONLY JUST BEGUN...
LAST WEEK, HARRY, YOU MADE AN AGREEMENT WITH A LAWYER! HE WOULD SHARE IN A CUT IF IT WAS SOMEHOW ARRANGED THAT YOU WOULD GET MORE OF MY INHERITANCE THAN YOUR BROTHER, CHIK!
BRIBING THE LAWYER IS IT? WHY YOU DIRTY...
NO, CHIK! IT ISN'T TRUE! IT'S A TRICK!
REMEMBER THE DEATH CARD? IT'S A TRICK TO GET US BOTH KILLED?
...CAN'T YOU SEE?!
AARG!
TWIN SHOTS RING OUT EXPLOSIVELY, AND BULLETS BRUTALLY SCREAM THROUGH FLESH, BONE, HERALDING A DOUBLE DEATH WITNESSED BY ONE WHO IS ALREADY DEAD...!
BAM! BAM!
ALL I CAN SEE IS YOUR GREED, LITTLE BROTHER!
OOOF!
FRATRICIDE IS THE WORST FORM OF MURDER... BUT YOUR SONS HAVE PAID FOR IT! YOU CAN STOP HAUNTING ME NOW! YOU HAVE ACHIEVED YOUR RETRIBUTION! YOUR SONS HAVE PAID FOR THEIR MURDERING YOU...
...AND THEY WILL SURELY GO TO HELL FOR MURDERING EACH OTHER!
THE TAROT CARD WAS PROPHETIC, AS ALWAYS! THROUGH THEIR JEALOUSY AND GREED FOR WEALTH THEY HAVE MURDERED ONE ANOTHER!!
YOU MUST BE AN INFINITELY SAD FATHER! BUT NOW YOU MAY REST IN PEACE...!
END


PROLOGUE...

SNIDDLE! IS THAT YOU, SNIDDLE?
WH-WHY YES, SIR!

WELL GO HOME YOU LOUSE! WORKING HOURS ARE OVER!
B-BUT, SIR, I THOUGHT....
DON'T THINK! JUST LEAVE!

IF Y-YOU SAY SO, SIR. WHOOPS!

CRASH!

DID YOU BREAK SOMETHING, SNIDDLE? IF YOU DID, YOU'RE FIRED! YOU HEAR ME, SNIDDLE? FIRED!

ART BY LUIS DOMINGUEZ / STORY BY GREG POTTER

WHAT?
YOU WERE TALKING TO -- OH, MY GOD!
NOTHING, SWEETS! I WAS JUST TALKING TO ALAN.
HEY, ALAN! HOW ARE YA? THE OLD TICKER SEEMS TO BE RUNNING SMOOTHLY. HUH? WHAT'S THAT YOU SAY? OH, YEAH. SHE DOES GET MY GOAT EVERY NOW AND THEN, BUT YOU MAKE IT ALL WORTHWHILE, ALAN! UH-HUH, THAT'S RIGHT! YOU! AWW, DON'T BE MODEST NOW, ALAN!
YOU'RE MY BEST BUDDY, AND DO YOU KNOW WHY? 'CAUSE EVERY MORNING YOU RING LOUD AND BRIGHT AND SUNNY! WHY, YOU'RE THE ONLY PLEASANT VOICE I HEAR ALL DAY LONG! AND BEST OF ALL, YOU WAKE HER UP AT FIVE O'CLOCK EVERY MORNING AND SHE CURSES YOU AND GETS MAD AND--AND--OH JOY! WHAT A GRAND JOKE THAT IS!
AND FURTHERMORE, ALAN, YOU NEVER, EVER CALL ME A LOUSE! NEVER! YOU'RE THE KINDEST PERSON IN THE WORLD, ALAN! YEAH! YOU NEVER COMPLAIN NOR NAG NOR DO ANYTHING THAT EVERYONE ELSE DOES TO ME! YOU'RE JUST TOO GOOD TO ME, ALAN!
ALL YOU DO IS GIVE YOUR CHEERY RING! RING! RING! RING!
BUMP
CRAASH!

OH MY HEAVENS, NO, ALAN!

I'VE KILLED HIM! OH NO! I'VE MURDERED MY POOR ALAN! B-BUT IT WAS AN ACCIDENT! YOU DO KNOW THAT, DON'T YOU, ALAN? I NEVER MEANT TO-- I SWEAR IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!

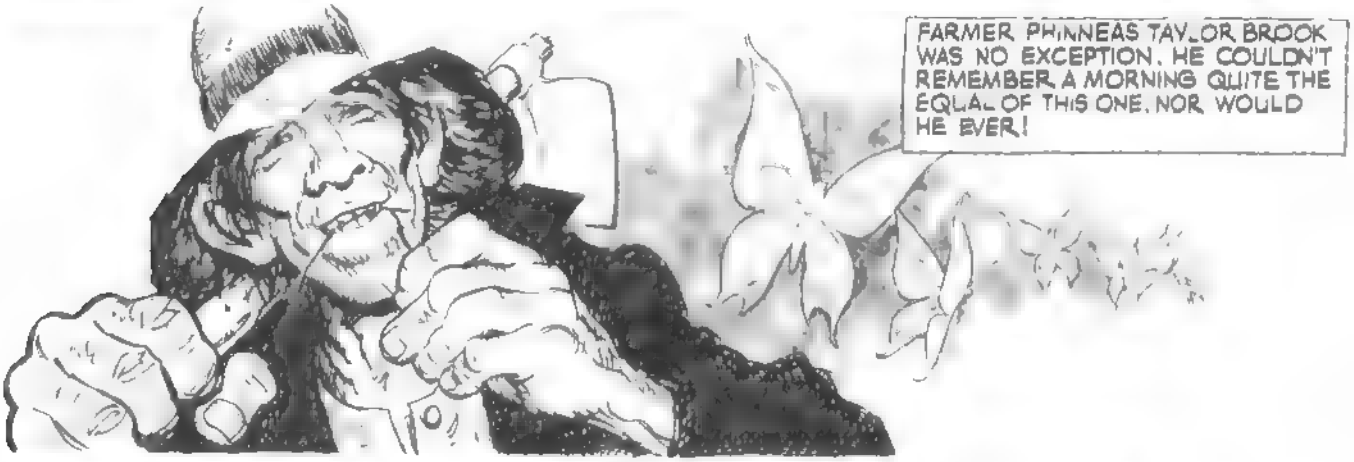
SURELY YOU DON'T BLAME ME FOR...
RING
WH-WHAT'S THAT?
RING! RING!

IT'S ALAN! THAT'S ALAN'S VOICE! NO! NO! I DIDN'T MEAN TO DO IT, ALAN! IT WAS ALL A MISTAKE! YOU'VE GOT TO FORGIVE ME!
RING! RING!
RING!
RING!

PLEASE, ALAN...MERCY...! STOP ! I CAN'T STAND IT....MY HEART YOU'RE MAKING MY HEAR--
RING! RING!
RING! RING! RING! RING!
MERVIN! MERVIN? YOU LOUSE, ANSWER THE TELEPHONE! ANSWER THE TELEPHONE!
SEEMS LIKE TIME RAN OUT FOR OLD MERV. REALLY AN ALARMING WAY TO GO. TOO BAD HE WASN'T SHOCK PROOF, EH?

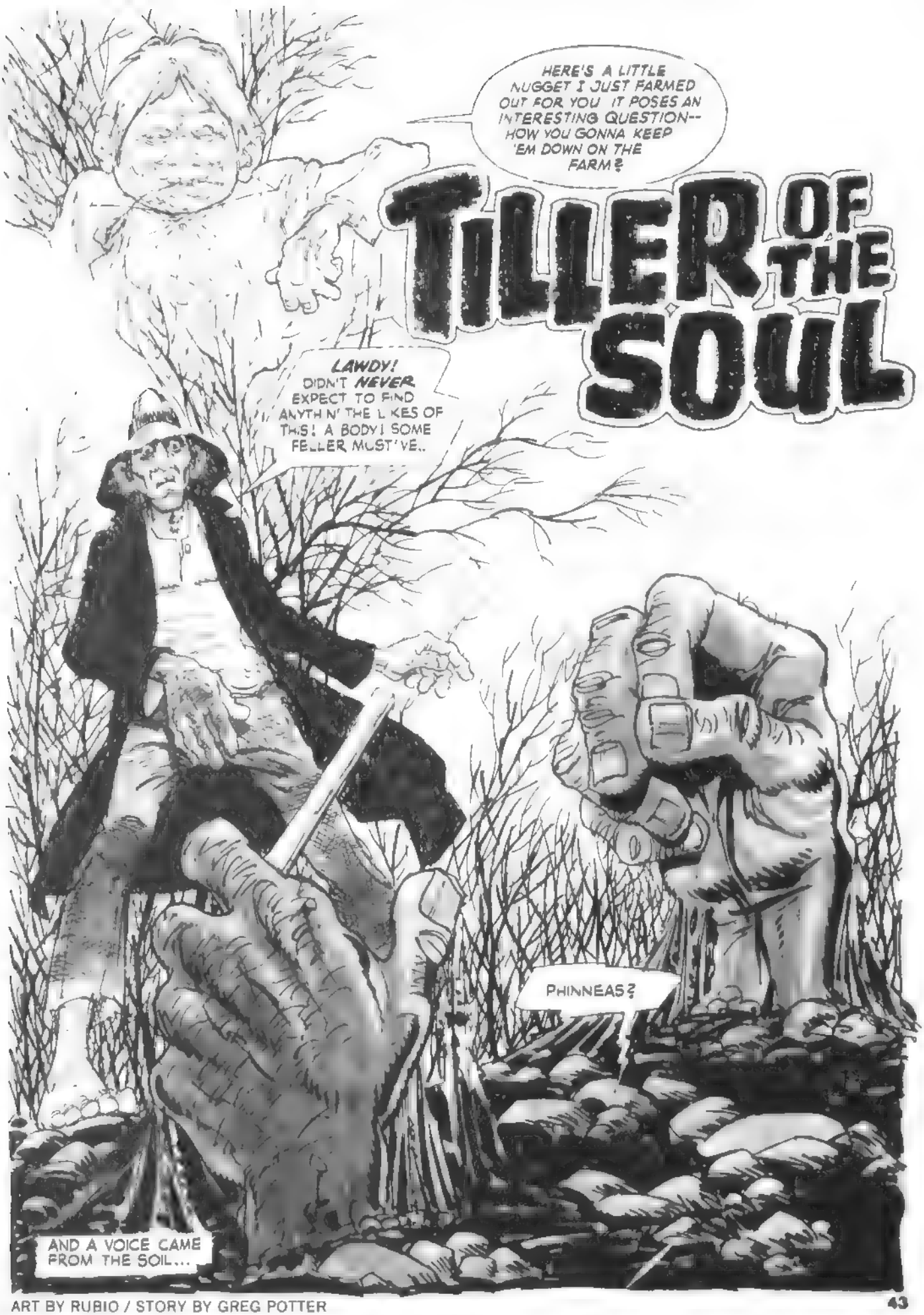
PROLOGUE

THE LOUISIANA MORNING WAS SUNNY, PEACEFUL AND CALM -- JUST THE RIGHT KIND OF DAY FOR A SMALL-TIME FARMER TO LINGER IN.


FARMER PHINNEAS TAYLOR BROOK WAS NO EXCEPTION. HE COULDN'T REMEMBER A MORNING QUITE THE EQUAL OF THIS ONE, NOR WOULD HE EVER!

MIGHT AS WELL GIT T'HOE RIGHT HERE. WHAT A DAY FER HOEING IT IS TOO! THE LORD'S IN HIS HEAVEN, TIS SURE! THE LORD'S...

LORD!



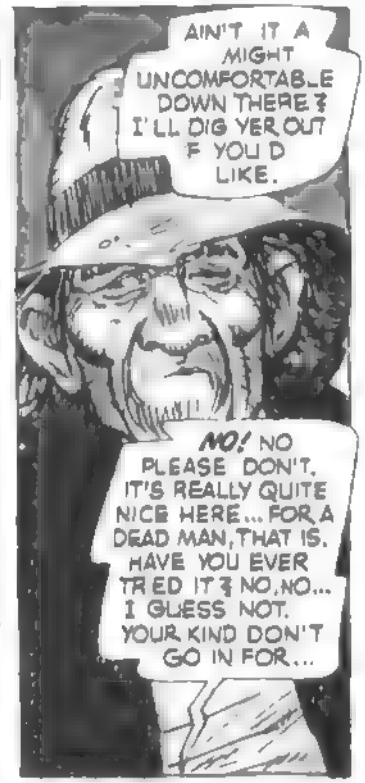
ART BY RUBIO / STORY BY GREG POTTER

SUDDENLY, THE LOUISIANA SKY ISN'T SO BLUE ANYMORE! IT SEEMS GRAY WITH FEAR!
PHINNEAS T. BROOK? IS THAT YOU, PHINNEAS?
SAINTS BEWILDERED! IT'S A-TALKIN'!

WHY STAND THERE? WHY NOT RUN? S IT FEAR THAT CEMENTS YOUR FEET IN THE COUNTRY SOIL?
PHINNEAS, PLEASE ANSWER. PLEASE?
A-AWRIGHT. I'M ANSWERIN' YER. B-BUT WHO ARE YER? WHAT ARE YER A-DOIN' DOWN THERE COVERED UP LIKE THAT?

THAT'S BETTER. THANK YOU, PHINNEAS. I'M SO VERY LONELY HERE. I HAVEN'T SPOKEN TO A SOUL IN AGES. IT'S GOOD TO HEAR A FRIENDLY VOICE. YOU ASKED ME WHAT I'M DOING DOWN HERE: WELL, YOU SEE... I'M... WHAT YOU MIGHT CALL... DEAD! DOES THAT EXPLAIN IT?

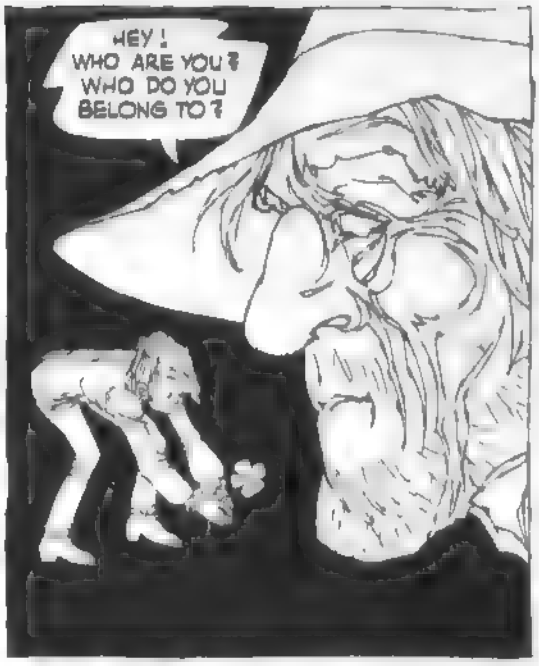
HELL NO!
OH. WHY DID I HAVE TO MENT ON THAT PLACE?
IT'S ALL QUITE SIMPLE, REALLY. ONE DAY I FELT SO LONELY THAT I JUST DEC DED TO LAY RIGHT DOWN HERE AND DIE. AND THAT'S EXACTLY WHAT I DID!


AIN'T IT A MIGHT UNCOMFORTABLE DOWN THERE? I'LL DIG YER OUT F YOU D LIKE.
NO! NO PLEASE DON'T. IT'S REALLY QUITE NICE HERE... FOR A DEAD MAN, THAT IS. HAVE YOU EVER TRIED IT? NO, NO... I GUESS NOT. YOUR KIND DON'T GO IN FOR...

YER DERN RIGHT WE DON'T! DON'T WANT YOU EVEN MENTIONING IT!
THAT HOE CAN'T HURT A DEAD MAN, PHINNEAS.
CALL ME BY?
W-WHAT'S YER MONICKER ANYHOW? WHAT KIN I CALL YER BY?

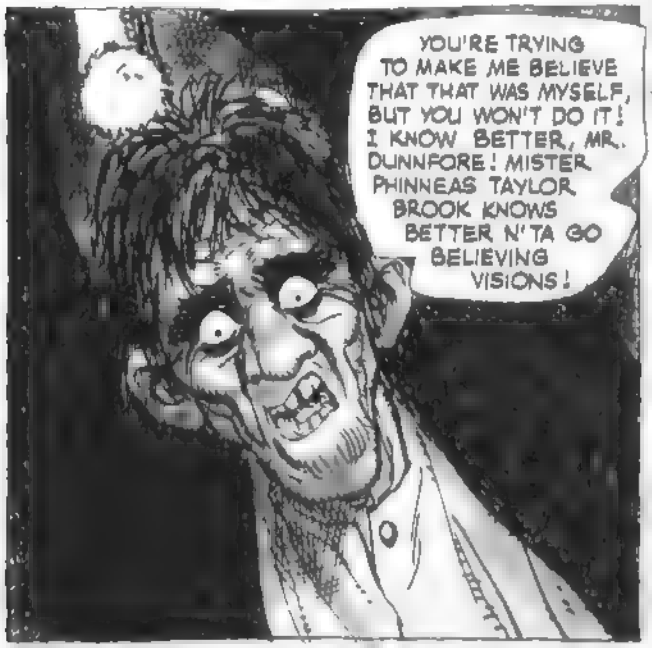
YER NAME! HANG IT ALL! WHAT'S YER NAME? DON'T TALK TO NOBODY NO-HOW WITHOUT KNOWIN' HIS NAME! YOU GOT ONE, DON'T YER?
HAW! HAW! DUNNFORE? AS IN DONE FOR? HAW. WELL, MR. DONE FOR, I'M CERTAINLY... HE! HE! HAW!... HAPPY TO MEET YER!
TELL ME MY GOOD SOUL, HAVE YOU MANY FRIENDS HERE?
EH?
FRIENDS, DEAR FELLOW! WHO DO YOU CONVERSE WITH?
NAME? OH YES! I HAD A NAME, BUT I COULDN'T STAND TO REPEAT IT. HOWEVER SEEING THAT YOU REQUIRE A NAME TO HOLD MY AQUAINTANCE, YOU MAY CALL ME... UM... MR. DUNNFORE!
DUNNFORE?
SO IT WOULD SEEM.
THE LOU'SIANA SKY THE NORTH WIND, THE GRASS THAT CUSHONS MY FEET. THAT'S WHO I TALK TO, MR. DUNNFORE. 'CAUSE THERE AIN'T NO HUMAN BEIN' WHO KIN STAND ME. THEY CAIN'T STAND A WIERD OLD CODGER LIKE ME. I STILL RUN AN OLD-FASHIONED ONE-MAN FARM IN AN AGE OF DANGED MONSTER MACHINERY. PEOPLE TREAT ME LIKE...
...I'M A GOAT OR SOMETHING. AIN'T GOT NO REAL FRIENDS, MR. DUNNFORE. NEVER HAD.
FACT IS, I NEVER HAD MUCH OF ANYTHING, MR. DUNNFORE. HAD LESS AND LESS AS I GOT OLDER. SEEMS LIKE I ALWAYS BEEN ALONE.
BUT WHAT WOULD YOU KNOW OF THAT?
PLENTY, DEAR SIR. YOU FORGET QUICKLY. I SAID ONE DAY I FELT SO LONELY I DIED, DIDN'T I? DO YOU THINK I WAS LONELY BECAUSE I WAS OVERWHELMED WITH FRIENDS? I ASSURE YOU NOT!
BUT IF YOU ARE ALONE, WHO IS THAT OVER THE HORIZON?
WHAT?!... IT LOOKS LIKE A CHILD!

YES... A CHILD, PHINNEAS. A CHILD THAT IS... FATHER TO THE MAN.

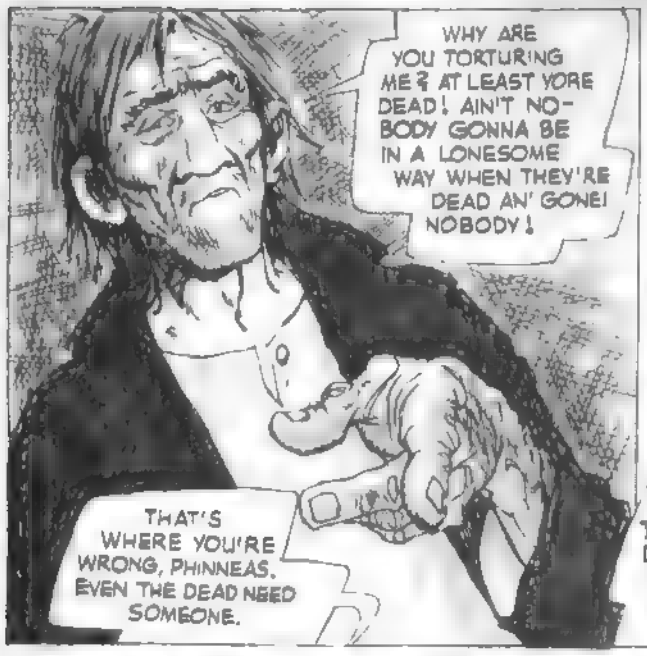

HEY! WHO ARE YOU? WHO DO YOU BELONG TO?

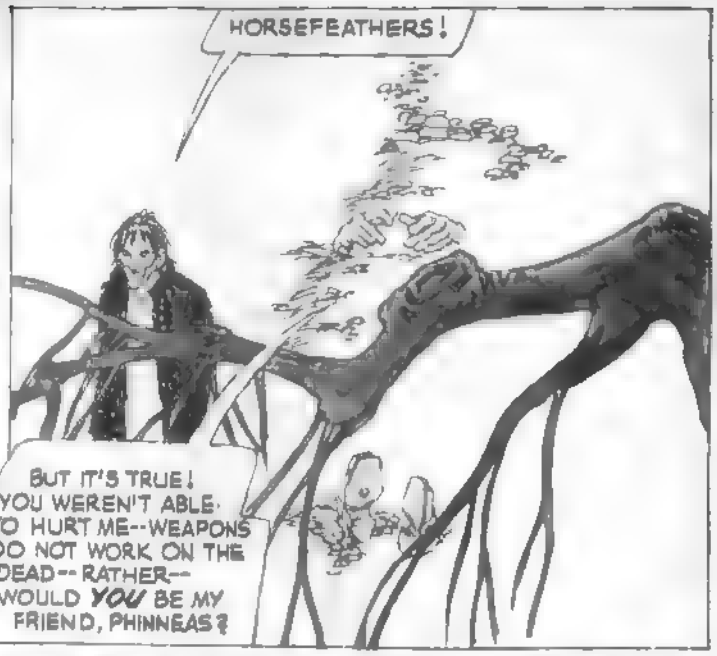
HEY! COME BACK! COME BACK HERE, YOU RASCAL!
DIDN'T YOU RECOGNIZE THE BOY, PHINNEAS?... THE CHILD IS FATHER TO THE MAN.

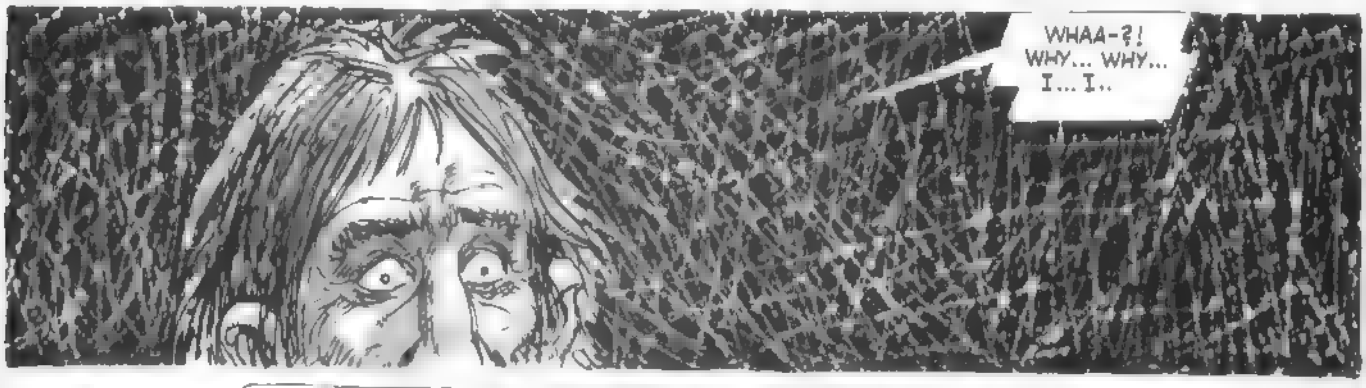
ENRAGED, PHINNEAS ATTACKED HIS TORMENTOR!
YOU'RE MAKING VISIONS! YOU'RE MAKING ME SEE THINGS THAT AREN'T THERE!


YOU'RE TRYING TO MAKE ME BELIEVE THAT THAT WAS MYSELF, BUT YOU WON'T DO IT! I KNOW BETTER, MR. DUNNFORE! MISTER PHINNEAS TAYLOR BROOK KNOWS BETTER N'TA GO BELIEVING VISIONS!

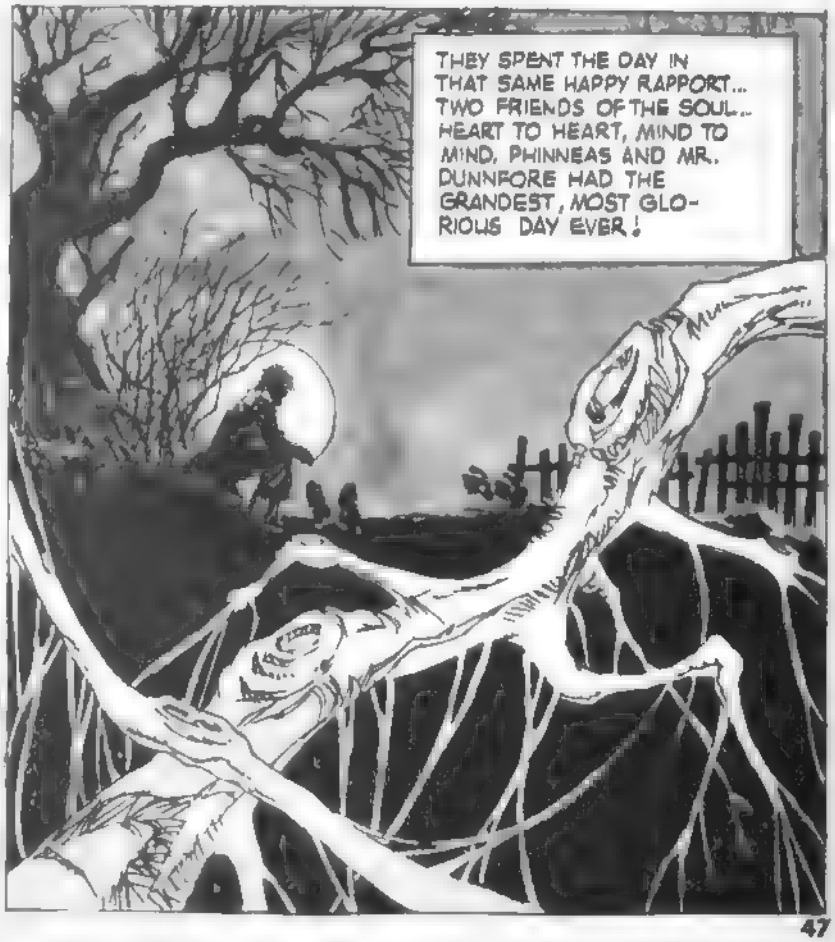
ANGRY, HURT, PHINNEAS FALLS FORWARD, TEARS MUDDYING THE LOUISIANA SOIL.


WHY ARE YOU TORTURING ME? AT LEAST YORE DEAD! AIN'T NOBODY GONNA BE IN A LONESOME WAY WHEN THEY'RE DEAD AN' GONE! NOBODY!
THAT'S WHERE YOU'RE WRONG, PHINNEAS. EVEN THE DEAD NEED SOMEONE.


HORSEFEATHERS!
BUT IT'S TRUE! YOU WEREN'T ABLE TO HURT ME--WEAPONS DO NOT WORK ON THE DEAD-- RATHER-- WOULD YOU BE MY FRIEND, PHINNEAS?


WHAA-?! WHY... WHY... I... I..

ALRIGHT, MR. DUNNFORE! I GIVE IN! IT'LL BE RIGHT PLEASUREABLE FINALLY TALKING TO SOMEONE, SURE 'NUFF! WE'RE NOW OFFICIAL FRIENDS IN GOOD STANDIN'!
IN GREAT STANDING, MR. BROOK.


THEY SPENT THE DAY IN THAT SAME HAPPY RAPPORT... TWO FRIENDS OF THE SOUL... HEART TO HEART, MIND TO MIND. PHINNEAS AND MR. DUNNFORE HAD THE GRANDEST, MOST GLORIOUS DAY EVER!

(YAWN!) GITTIN' A MIGHT TIRED, MR. DUNNFORE. GUESS I'D BEST TURN IN FER THE NIGHT.
YESSIR, IT'S BEEN A REAL PLEASURE. BUT THE DAY'S JEST 'BOUT DONE. GOTTA SKEEDADDLE... BUT...UM...
BUT WHAT, OLD FRIEND? ASK ANYTHING. IT SHALL BE YOURS!
REALLY?
REALLY.
AND WE WERE HAVING SUCH A GRAND TIME, TOO! BUT OF COURSE I UNDERSTAND
I'D LIKE TO CATCH A GANDER AT YORE FACE JEST CURIOUS AT WHAT MY ONLY FRIEND LOOKS LIKE.
OH, PSHAW! I'LL GIVE FIVE TA ONE THAT YORE ONE OF THE HANSOMEST MEN THAT EVER LIVED, MR. DUNNFORE! WITH YORE CHARMIN' PERSONALITY...
WITH EACH DIG OF THE HOE, THE FACE BECOMES CLEARER, THE MEMORIES MORE VIVID. PHINNEAS TAYLOR BROOK, YOU WERE SO LONELY! SO FRIENDLESS! SO IN NEED OF COMPANIONSHIP THAT YOU FOUND THE ONLY FRIEND YOU EVER HAD!
THAT FRIEND.. YOUR OWN DEAD BODY! EVEN THE DEAD NEED SOMEONE!
I WISH YOU HADN'T ASKED THAT, PHINNEAS. IT'S NOT PRETTY, YOU REALIZE. PLEASE DON'T LOOK.
I'M SORRY... BUT SINCE YOU INSIST..
LAWDY NO!
THAT'LL TEACH YOU TO TALK TO STRANGERS! STAND UP AND PLOW RIGHT! YOU KNOW WHAT THEY SAY ABOUT PEOPLE WHO TALK TO THEMSELVES!

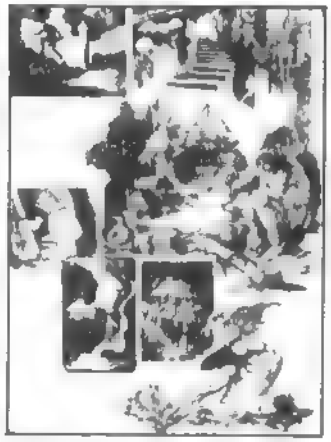
ORIGINAL POSTERS by MAROTO

FIRST TIME OFFERED — 27" X 20" DRAWINGS

MAROTO POSTER #1

MAROTO POSTER #2

MAROTO POSTER #3



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In 1875 Professor Darwin wrote: "This plant commonly called Venus Fly Trap from the rapidity and force of its movements, is one of the most wonderful in the world... It is surprising how a slightly damp bit of meat... will produce these effects. It seems hardly possible and yet it is certainly a fact."

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EERIE SHORT-SHORT SHOCKER! The PARADE

TEXT BY DOUGLAS MOENCH / ILLUSTRATIONS BY DUBE

It was a pretty bizarre scene. Midnight isn't exactly the normal time for a parade, but the folks of Sleepy Grove, pop. 23 had their hearts set on it. So they waited.

A town the size of Sleepy Grove, having only one real street the way it does, is hard pressed for the kind of funds necessary to wire up those street lights which turn big cities into pinball machines. So, in two parallel lines to either side of their one street (called Main), the folks just stood under the chicken-poxed moon. Waiting.

Light like that can turn a smile into a frown. Or the other way around. There was no real way of knowing what kind of expressions the folks wore on their faces behind that thick summer gloom. But every once in a while you could see the quick flash of eyes. Like miniature moons, gleaming steadily.

"I'm hungry," complained Jimmy Tucker in that kind of whining voice which usually means a kid's up past his bedtime.

Pa Tucker stared down the street into the darkness which stretched as far as the eye could not see. "It's all in the mind, boy."

"No it's not. It's in my stomach. Something's boiling in my stomach. It hurts. It means I'm hungry. I need to eat something."

"Something ain't here yet, boy. But the parade's comin' soon. Just you wait. It'll be comin' soon. Then you'll eat."

"I don't believe the parade's coming. And I don't believe I'll eat. I'm hungry."

A cool breeze tumbled down the street, putting dirt in the folks' eyes which they didn't like and drying the top layer of their sweat which they did. Sue Ellen ignored the grit in her left eye and just kept staring down the street. She didn't want to seem too eager, but just the same who wasn't aware of the way her neck arched forward or the way her thin body bent outward from the waist. "Do you think he'll really be in the parade?" she asked her sister.

"You ought to know." Sissy Allen lifted the back of her hair and fanned the nape of her neck with the hand-bunched pony tail. "You made sure of it."

"Did I?"

"Can't change your tune in mid-verse."

"I wasn't lying. It's just that well, how can you trust folks nowadays?"

Pa Tucker was getting impatient. "I told you, boy, you'll eat soon's the parade rolls into town."

"How do you know it's comin'?" Jimmy said petulantly.

Sue arched her neck further into the blackness. She imagined twice, she saw the start of the parade. But she didn't. Not yet, she told herself, but it'll come. Soon now. She said it again, not wanting to steal any more reassurance from Sissy.

"That's old man Tucker with his kid across the street, ain't it?"

"I guess you're right." Reassured, Sue unconsciously

"We arranged it, boy. All of us. All the townsmen. Why Sam Carwell was right next to me when we arranged it. You just run down the street and ask Sam if you don't believe me."

"Runnin' makes my stomach hurt more. It gets me hot and my stomach boils so much I think it's gonna brim over and make me sick. I'll wait here. But I still don't believe no parade's comin'."

Anna Carwell worked up more sweat by fanning herself than the fanning got rid of, but it gave her something to do. "Sam, do you think it was right to arrange the parade for now?"

Her husband grunted. "Shoulda done it months ago, if that's what you mean."

"You know that's not what I mean. We're a tight-knit town here. We got to keep to ourselves. A parade like this might bring strangers and who knows what all else."

"It was a stranger what made this parade possible. Without the stranger, wouldn't be no parade. You don't see none of the townsfolk puttin' on the parade, do you?"

"But you and old Tucker and all the rest arranged for it."

"And that's why there's gonna be a parade. Wouldn't be no parade without a stranger and wouldn't be no parade if we didn't arrange for it with the stranger. Ain't much opportunity for a parade out here. Man's got to provide for the happiness of his family and his town whenever he can. Stop that fannin'; you're only workin' up more of a sweat."

Sue Allen realized just how far her neck was arched and pulled it back. Wouldn't do to look too eager, she thought. "Sissy, what if he don't come in the parade?"

"You know there wouldn't be no parade that deserves to be called a parade **without** him. He'll be in the parade. Don't fret so much. Just wait. It'll be here in good time. And so will he.

"I hope so, Sissy. He was so big and strong. Handsome you know? I hope so."

"Everybody knows," Sissy said wisely, "that you took a shine to him when you was fixin' it so's the men could arrange the parade. Everybody knows. Don't wear it on your chest."

Jimmy Tucker had reached the fidgeting stage. "Will it be a good parade, Pa?"

"Thought you didn't believe there was gonna be **any** parade, boy."

"My stomach's boiling too much for me not to believe there'll be a parade. Will it be as good as the last parade, Pa?"

"You liked the last one, did you?"

"Yeah, Pa. There was lots to eat at the last parade."

"Well, boy, this parade'll be even bigger and better than the last one. Just you wait and see. The parade'll come up over the hill and right into town, right down Main Street. Me and Sam and the rest of the men made sure of it, and we ain't never put on a false parade yet, have we?"

"No . . . I guess not, Pa. But I wish we could have **more** parades."

"Strangers don't like to have parades way out here, boy. They don't like it at all. Takes a lot of convincin' to make 'em see things our way too."

A cloud began to erase the moon and rows of waiting faces flickered from smiles to frowns and back again.

"Nice night for a parade," Simon Green ventured.

"Um," replied Horace, the town carpenter. But he kept looking down Main for the parade.

"Did you do a good job for the parade, man?" Simon asked.

"Built it to his exact specifications."

"No need to get uppity about it. Everybody knows you're the best carpenter in town."

"Everybody knows I'm the only carpenter in town, too," Horace said.

"Yeah, but you specialize in parades like nobody else does."

"Like nobody else can."

"Um," said Simon, turning back to watch for the parade.

"I hope he comes," Sue Allen said.

"He will," said her sister.

"Are you sure it was the right thing to do?" asked Anna Carwell, behind her fan.

"It was the only thing to do, way I see things," replied her husband Sam.

"Is it true, Pa," asked Jimmy Tucker, "what they say about Sue Allen and the parade man?"

Pa Tucker scowled. "Just never you mind what they say about Sue Allen. She helped get this parade on and that's all that matters."

"Too bad there ain't more call for parade work, eh, Horace?" commented Simon.

"Um," said Horace. He licked the sweat from his upper lip.

The cloud left the moon behind and smiles writhed into frowns and frowns became smiles while all were the same somehow and anyway.

Then the music drifted in upon another breeze. All along both sides of the street heads perked up like puppets strung together on one long string. The music sounded sad, dirge like, the way it always did before you could see the parade. But when the parade rolled into view it would turn into happy music, the way it always did.

Sue Allen craned her neck, not caring who saw her now. She remembered how the stranger had staggered into town, sweaty and grimy, rolling his flat tire. So big and strong. A business man. The perfect man to put on a parade. She didn't even mind this time. The smiles were almost genuine, the pouting lips, the sinuously defiant walk all justified. But when she'd lured him into the barn, with the musty scent of wet hay in her nostrils, she had returned to sanity and was glad it had been cut short. By old Tucker and Sam and the rest with their carefully timed entrance.

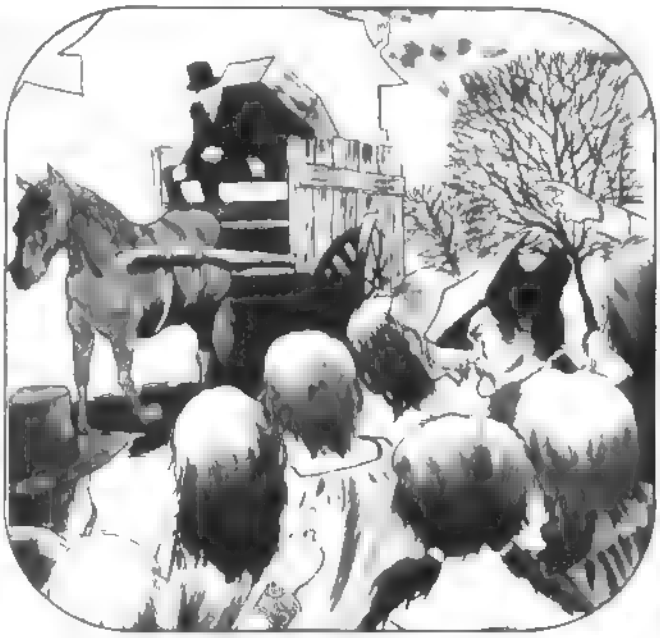
Across the street Pa Tucker listened to the growing music and mused that a man big and strong of body was also strong of will. The stranger had fought their proposal with all the strength he'd had. Even though they'd cornered him in the barn with Sue Allen as they'd arranged, it had taken the pooled resources of all the townsmen to convince the stranger that the parade was going to be put on.

Then the cart trundled over the hill and creaked down Main Street towards the waiting space between the double row of avid watchers.

Horace the carpenter admired his handiwork. The stranger was big; it was the longest box Horace had ever made. But at least there would be plenty for everybody.

The cart was closer now. Jimmy Tucker began hopping excitedly. "See," his pa said. "I told you it'd come. I told you you'd eat soon."

And like starved vultures the townsfolk of Sleepy Grove swooped, giggling, upon the midnight funeral procession.



END

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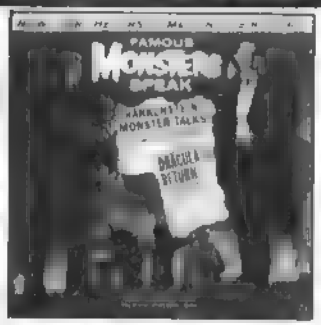

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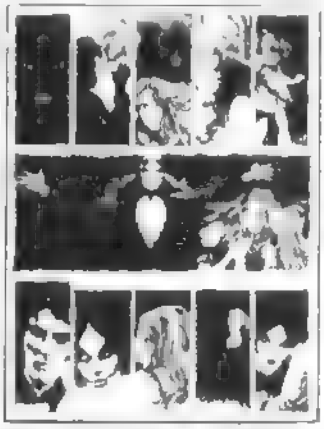

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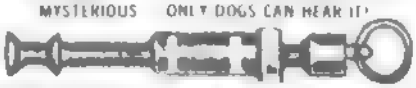

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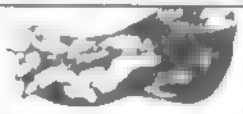

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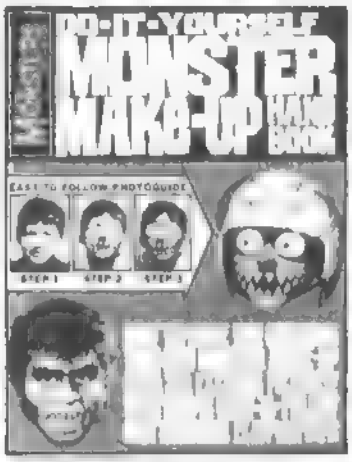

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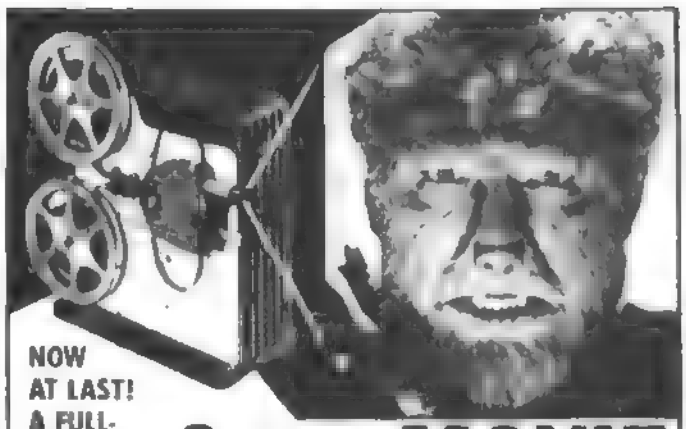

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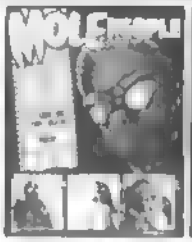

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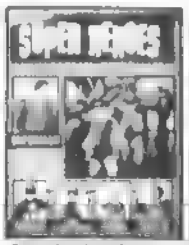

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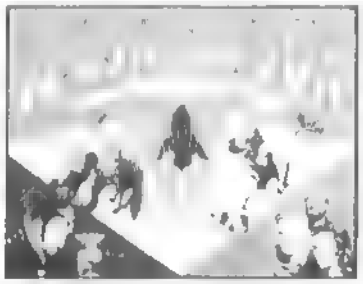

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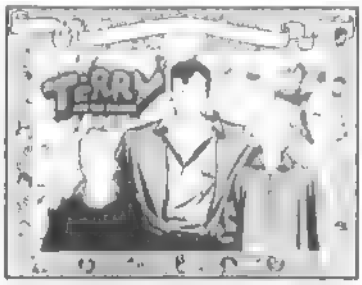

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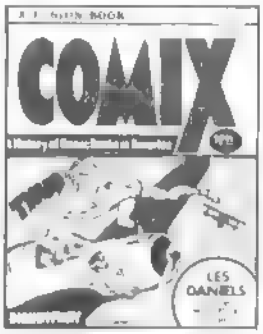

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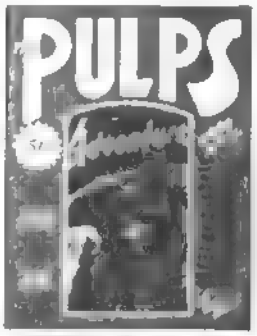

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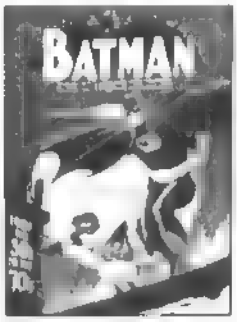

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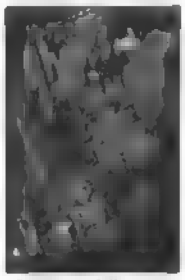

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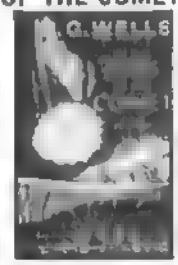

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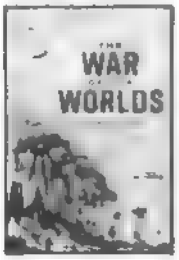

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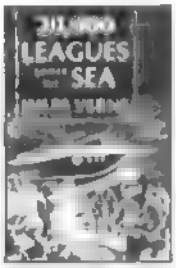

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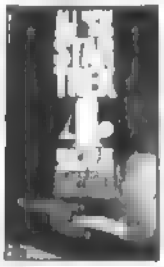

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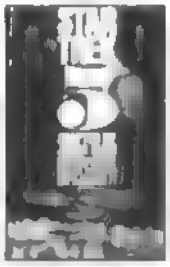

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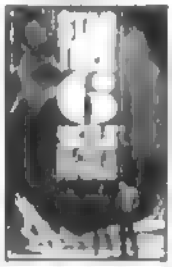

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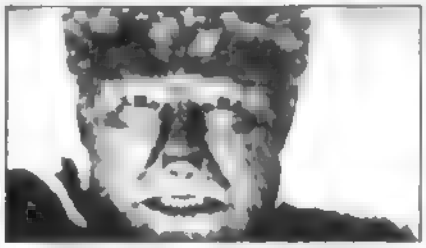

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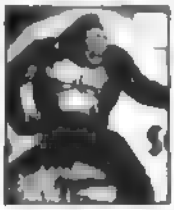

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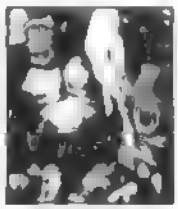

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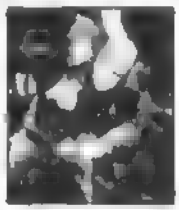

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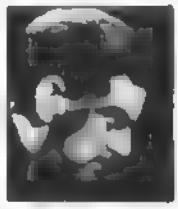

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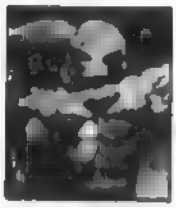

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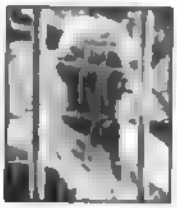

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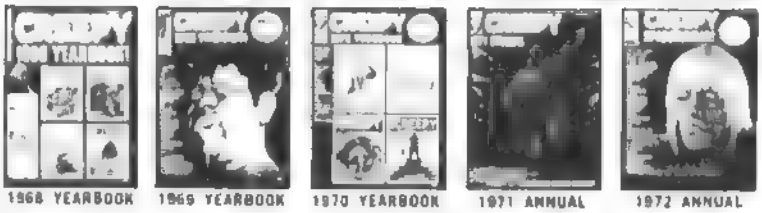
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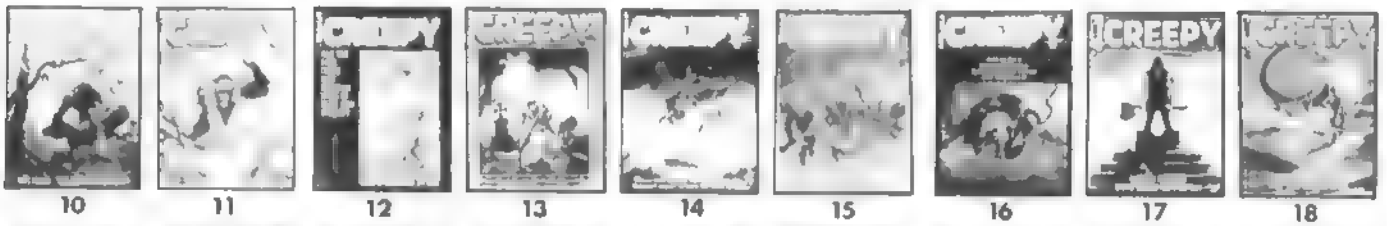
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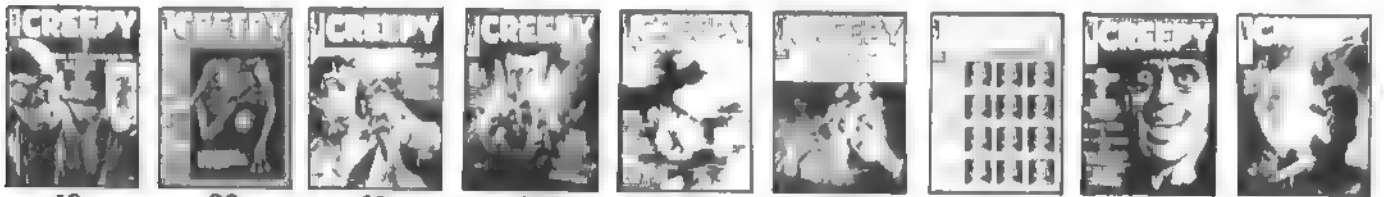
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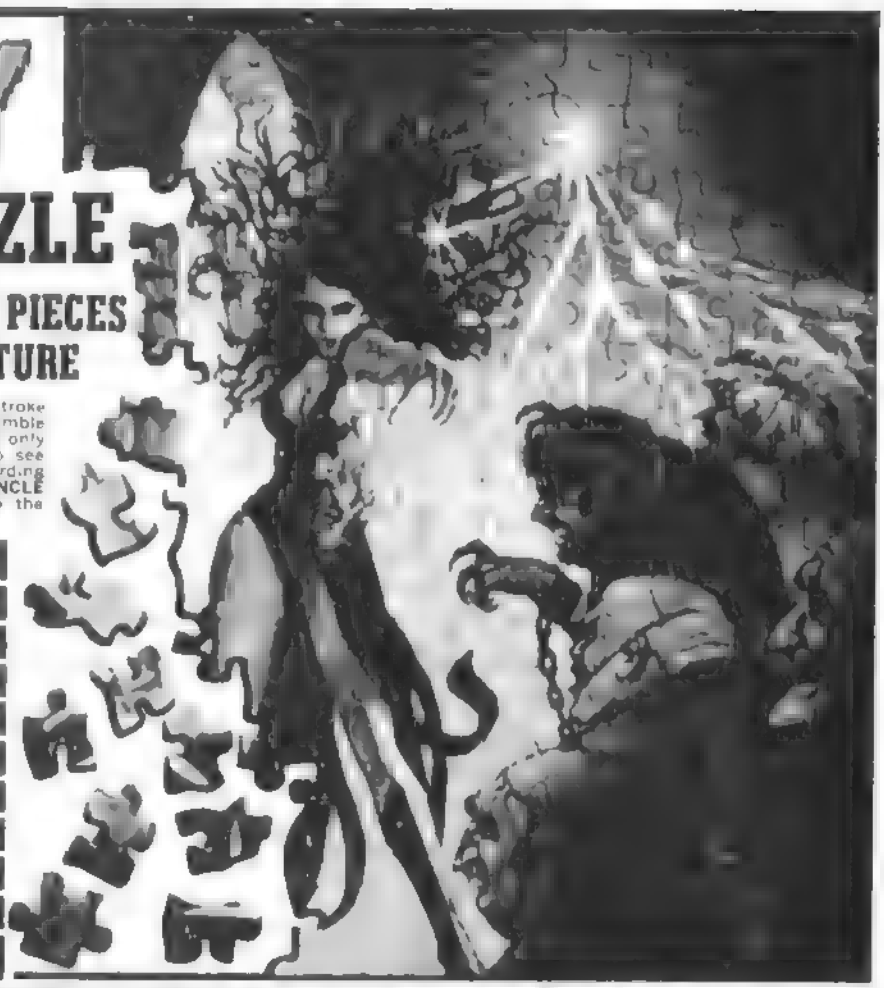

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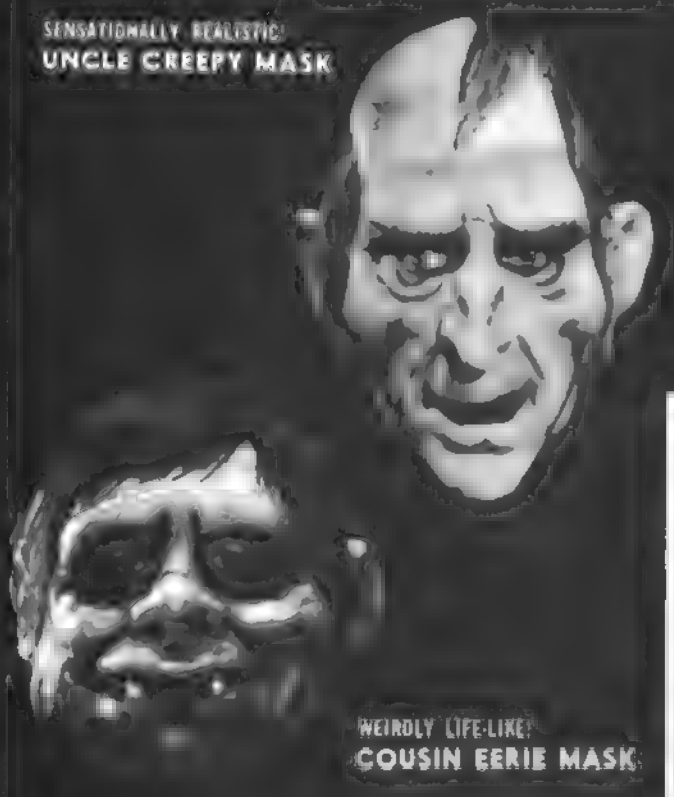

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ARTIST'S PROFILE: LUIS DOMINGUEZ

Artist Luis Dominguez whose art appears on the cover of this issue, and on "Mervin's Dead Ringer," pg. 38.

On October 17, 1923, an EERIE-looking baby was born in the beautiful city of Cordoba, Argentina! Not a spectacular event, since EERIE little kids are born every day! But a noteworthy event in the lives of EERIE readers! That child was Luis Dominguez! And if he hadn't been born that October day in 1923, this issue of EERIE would have had four blank pages where "Mervin's Dead Ringer" should have been! (See page 38.) Not to mention that we wouldn't have had a cover this issue! Luis was responsible for both pieces of art!

Luis has been a Warren artist for almost a year now. His first strip, "Point of View" appeared in Creepy #47. "Vengeance, Brother, Vengeance" in Vampirella #20 allowed Luis to show off some of his fine art techniques. And the past three covers of EERIE have established Luis as one of the leading cover painters around.

Luis blames his present fate on Gustav Dore, the famous surrealist artist. "I remember looking at Dore illustrations in an edition of 'Don Quixote' even before I could read," Luis stated. "I was only four or five, but I distinctly remember how much I was frightened by Dore's drawings. I had continual nightmares of the things! From there, I just thought of how great it would be to scare little kids (like I was) half to death with great artwork!" So here he is, working for EERIE magazine!

Luis came to America in 1959 when he was offered a permanent job drawing comics for Charlton press. From there he ventured over to Dell comics, became a regular on the Gold Key comics art staff, and is now doing work for National Comics as well as EERIE magazine.

Luis is happy in his chosen field of endeavors, illustrating comic books. He likes to speak of how he fights with editors (managing editors in particular) over his artwork. "They try to turn me into a camera—copying photos and swiping reference from real life for my artwork. I just want to work from my imagination—to fly free in my work . . . and to be happy! After all, that's what life's all about!" Luis still enjoys scaring the eyeballs off of kids with his artwork.

Luis Dominguez' most recent artwork graces the pages of this issue of EERIE, so we thought it might be interesting to show some of Luis' older artwork. Above is a sketch from one of Luis' first comic strips, produced when he was fourteen years old.

A LITTLE FARTHER

The man gradually became aware. He had been bottled up in some way or maybe just bound while blacked out. Apparently he had been carried to some green and quiet country location. On the grass by a stream, to be exact. He lay sprawled, propped up by one arm, as though he'd been dropped. A little beyond a hill he could see the belfry of a church or school and the roof of another building. This meant there was a village about a mile away.

Rubbing his forehead to clear his thoughts, which were dreamlike, he looked in other directions. A few trees, nothing more. Might as well start walking. He stood stretched and took a tentative stop toward the village, feeling as though he might topple any moment.

The sun beat down unmercifully and he mopped the sweat from his brow, about ready to give up going on. It all seemed so hopeless. The wind was threadbare at best and his clothes stuck against him, almost hindering him from going on, trying to find a way out. It was as if they were alive and trying to warn him to stop, to give it up, that there was nothing ahead. He trudged onward, the sun leading him forward. The village had to be just over the next rise. He couldn't see it just yet but it had to be there. It had to be. He had been walking for hours. He knew he couldn't walk forever. Soon some kind of civilization would reveal itself. It had to.

He regained his strength rapidly and began striding. His memory, however, did not improve. He seemed both vague and unconcerned about his past. As to what had just recently happened to him he was a little puzzled but resigned. The thing now was to find somebody. It was not clear to him what he needed except to be with people. That's what he was after.

He walked over the hill. It appeared there was another hill to be crossed before he could reach the village. Down to the base of a shallow vale, up to the crest of the second hill. Before him now, a plain and another hill. This only faintly annoyed him, as he was not yet himself. His normal sense of urgency, his usual impatience, was still missing.

Lost in a vaporous musing that held little promise of becoming constructive thinking, he plodded along. He had one relevant idea. He told himself: I'll never get there at this rate.

When the top of the next hill showed another to be mounted, he added a perception. Although he could see varying amounts of the visible buildings as he continued the endless hike, they had not changed distance. They looked no nearer than when he had first noticed them.

After that his mind became clearer. His sense of time returned. He found his jaw and forearm muscles tensing again. He was bound to get to that village soon. This tiresome walking would be over and he could find out where he was and how to get home. The next hill had to be the last.

Yet his clearer mind was returning to the first idea that had come to him in so many words. It was now a little simpler. It was, "I'll never get there."

HARRY E. MONGOLD

DEEP SLEEP

I sit in my room again praying that the affliction of lycanthropy will not overtake me again. Tonight the moon will be full and I will go through that horrible change once more. Like last night I shall prowl the streets in search of a new victim. Lord, how I curse the wretched man who brought this evil upon me.

The sun is setting now. In a few more hours the moon will rise and I will be overcome with the long called superstition. The sun is gone and the stars are out, but the moon has not yet risen. I think I shall sleep, so I may not witness my transfiction.

The moon is now high in the heavens. I hear myself growling like that of an animal. My wishes were in vain for here again I am a wolf. I leap through my bedroom window but I do not hurt myself. I quickly head towards the village. But what's this, many people coming towards me, the leader clutching a large gun.

They start running now, the leader stops, aims and fires the gun. I feel a tremendous pain in my chest. I fall to the ground. The transfiction starts again but only in reverse. My face is once more that of a man. I feel weak. I close my eyes for the last time and fall into deep sleep.

VICTOR OLCHOWKA

THE FEAST

As I write this account I am already dead All that is left to me is the waiting And this will culminate in destruction of this I am sure My hand trembles as I write these words—it is not easy for a doomed man to retain his sanity

If only I hadn't seen the things which I have come to curse a thousand times that unholy feast that haunts my dreams and plagues my waking hours If only I could blot out the dark memories of those blasphemous rites those ungodly events which took place on the top of Round Mountain My eyes burn now as they burned on that dreadful night, that night of unspeakable horrors of things better left unseen by mortal man

I plead with you who read this, take down the stones which stand in silence on Round Mountain Take them down and bury them, bury them deep The evil which lurks in those god-forsaken stones must be returned to the primal muck which spawned it Drag down the altar and cast its terrible slab into a pit. Do not look too closely at the accursed symbols you will find on it

Were those hellish abnormalities nothing more than my imagination? Did I imagine those malformed monstrosities I thought I saw silhouetted in the infernal bonfires? Were they fantasies? And what of their oozing and clotted foods, their bloody carnage? What was it that those wretched horrors feasted upon? What indeed? The blood the slobbering abnormalities the gorging in crimson light,—what did I see?

My hands ... stiffening What in the name of all that is held sacred was that amorphous blight, that formless entity contained in the monoliths and worshipped by those pitiful denizens of the hills that ultimate chaos which bubbled forth from the stones the black infinity, the unfathomable darkness

All these things I have seen at least I think that I have seen them I pray to God that I am wrong, but, alas, I know there is no escape from the inevitable...already they have found me... I hear their furtive scratching beneath me, far underground digging, coming closer Soon they will be here

I remain, waiting

TOM MORGANTI

EERIE

Devilish photograph of our own little Cousin EERIE was snapped in the full light of the moon by an astute ghoul Or so Uncle Creepy claimed when he passed this picture onto us. Is that really EERIE glowering at us or some demoniacal imitation?

A TOUCH OF FACE

It was late one night on a cold, barren London alley when Jane Edwinson, an apple vendor, walked home after a hard day's work Suddenly a scream rang out and Jane being the curious type went to investigate There in the thick cloud of fog ahead she saw a strange man bending over a girl who was lying on the ground. Jane stood paralyzed as the man grinned and laughed at her He suddenly disappeared from sight As he ran, he accidently dropped a medallion Unseen Jane picked up the medallion and ran home Later the next morning, she tried to open it but couldn't

The next few months for Jane were difficult at best She was poor and never had a friend Then she met Frank Frank was a tall and infinitely handsome He worked at a corner butcher shop For many weeks they went out together to dances movies and parties One day he proposed to her They got married soon after in a small church in the heart of London As Jane's present to Frank, she gave him a medallion Frank smiled and asked, "Where did you get this?" She said she found it near a dead girl murdered by a strange man

Can you open it?" Frank asked

No, I cannot " Jane answered

Frank opened the medallion and Jane saw the murdered girl's face and her own face in the medallion

"You see," Frank said, "I put the pictures of the girls I'm going to kill in this medallion So—" he paused smiling, "you know who I really am now, dear Jane?

No' Jane said, backing away

All of a sudden Frank pulled off a fake plastic nose, then ears, and hair He drew a knife and said, "I have many names, but the name I like best is JACK THE RIPPER "

ROBERTO TABALDO

The Fatal Dream

Darkness flooded his mind As he walked down the seemingly endless corridor, pain shot through his body almost as if a knife had been forced deeply into his flesh It was a sudden soul shattering pain and he wanted to give in to it and crumple to the floor

The place had the smell of a crypt The stale air surged through his nostrils and a rat scurried past his feet Where was this place? He tried to remember what had happened, who he was and why he was here but there were no answers. Why the agonizing pain that shot through his body?

He approached a door and gripped the handle. It turned and the door opened under a squeaking protest Flames scorched his mouth He could almost taste the sulfur on his lips A pit of molten lava lay before him Through the flames, a monstrous head appeared, growing larger with every lash of fire He ran and the head chased him, growing ever larger Another corridor just ahead His last chance

'Dr Jordan, he's dead Died from shock as I removed the bullet Poor pitiful soul

MIKE WEILER

SEARCH FOR THE SUN

I was sane when they brought me here I tell you, but now I fear that I am going mad! I have been in this room for as long as I can remember

Never has any sunlight penetrated into this room And as I think back, I cannot recall having ever seen the sun's light before I was brought here Thus, I have been tunneling my way through these walls in my search for the sun and the outer world that I have never known

Among my "roommates' there has always been mysterious deaths which, as talk has it, were caused by "a vile creature of darkness that lives on human blood,' and is called a vampire. The rate of deaths is increasing rapidly as is my tunneling speed in hopes that I may kill the vampire with the cleansing sunlight before it has a chance to kill me I have done it! I have broken through!

Satan preserve my soul! I'm the only one left! I'm the vampire! My search for the sun has doomed me! Slowly I slump to the cold stone floor to await the inevitable rising of the sun, and with it my death

BILL HIGHTOWER

BACK FROM THE DEAD

Cartoonish Dracula laments the iron-poor blood he's been ingesting lately. Poor Dracula! Fan artist responsible for this slander of the master is Canadian reader Bill MacDonald who writes, "EERIE, yours is a far-out magazine! Your artists are the best in the illustrating world!"

NOW HEAR THIS!

EERIE wants you to send in all of your slithering stories and scarifying artwork now! Address all fan submissions to

EERIE FANFARE
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LAKE OF GOLD!

THE TRIBE HAS TASTED THE DREGS OF *DEFEAT*-- ITS SPIRIT *BROKEN* BY THE COLD WEIGHT OF IRON *FETTERS*. *SARKO* AND HIS MARAUDERS PILLAGE AND PLUNDER *ALL* THAT REMAINS...

ATTEND MY WORDS! *DEATH* MAY LACK LIFE-- BUT IT IS *BETTER* THAN *SLAVERY!*

RISE UP MY PEOPLE! *FIGHT* AGAINST THE *OPPRESSOR*--AND IF NEED BE--*FALL!*

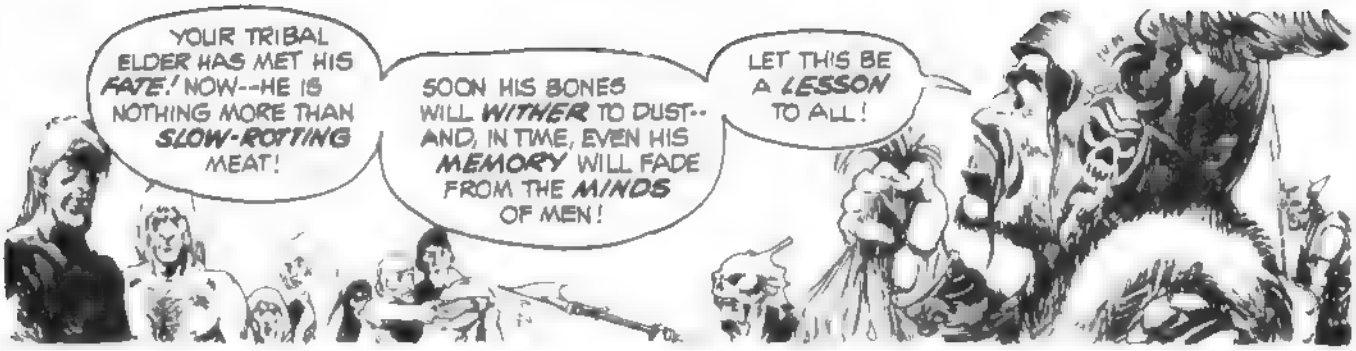
LIGHT HAS *FLED* THESE OLD EYES--BUT MY SOUL WILL *NEVER* BE CHAINED!

BUT LET IT BE A DEATH WITH *HONOR*-- WITH *DIGNITY!*

YOUR *WISH*, WIZENED ONE-- WILL SOON BE *GRANTED!*

DAX THE WARRIOR

ART AND STORY BY ESTEBAN MAROTO


YOUR TRIBAL ELDER HAS MET HIS FATE! NOW--HE IS NOTHING MORE THAN SLOW-ROTTING MEAT!
SOON HIS BONES WILL WITHER TO DUST--AND, IN TIME, EVEN HIS MEMORY WILL FADE FROM THE MINDS OF MEN!
LET THIS BE A LESSON TO ALL!

THE MANACLED VILLAGERS ARE HERDED TO THE SHIP--WITH THE WOUNDED LEFT BEHIND ON A BLOOD-STAINED BEACH...
SARKO RAPIDLY SETS SAIL

--ONLY TO RUN AFOUL A TEMPEST-CHURNED SEA! THE WIND WAILS A BELLOWING BANSHEE-CRY! WAVES LASH AT THE CRAFT WITH EVER-INCREASING FURY...

THE FRAIL, SHUDDERING VESSEL CREAKS AND GROANS LIKE A THING IN TORMENT--ROCKING WILDLY AMID THE HOWLING GALE...

LIGHTEN THE SHIP--LEST IT BE SWAMPED!
HURL THE SLAVES OVER THE RAIL--THAT WE MIGHT SURVIVE!

LIGHTNING CRACKS ACROSS THE SKY--AND ABOVE THE CRASH OF BOOMING THUNDER--THE SCREAMS OF THE DAMNED AND DYING...

DEATH ASSUMES MANY FORMS! IT IS ALL-ENVELOPING WATER-- THE BONE-CRUSHING PRESSURE OF COUNTLESS FATHOMS-- AND RAVENOUS, RAZOR-FANGED SHARKS...

THE SHIP SAFELY LIMPS ACROSS FOAM-FLECKED WAVES--BUT ITS PRECIOUS HUMAN CARGO IS GONE...

WE LEAK LIKE A SEA-BORN SPONGE! REPAIRS MUST BE MADE!
CHANGE COURSE FOR KRIWO-AES!
BUT WHAT OF THE LEGEND? IT IS SAID A SINISTER SEA-GOD ROAMS THAT ACCURSED LAND!

THEN, WE'LL TEST GOD'S STRENGTH AND SKILL-- AGAINST MY IMPERIAL ARCHERS!

SARKO SOON VIEWS THE OMINOUS GRAY GIRTH OF KRIWO-AES-- AS IT RISES FROM THE MIST-SHROUDED SEA!
AND FOR ONE APPREHENSIVE MOMENT--THE PIRATE-LEADER EXPERIENCES THE PANGS OF FEAR...

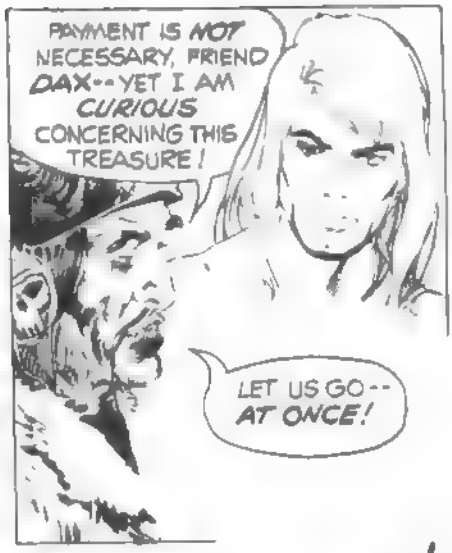
--BUT IT IS QUICKLY DISPELLED AS BURNISHED BLADES RASP FROM JEWEL-STUDED HILTS--AND THE SLAVE-TRADERS ADVANCE...
BE WARY! HIDDEN TRAPS COULD ABOUND IN THIS UNKNOWN REALM!

BUT WHAT THREAT IS THERE-- FROM LAUGHING AUBURN-TRESSED WOMEN-- AND A SINGLE MIGHTY-THEWED, BRONZE GIANT?
MY NAME IS DAX!
AS LORD OF THIS ISLE--I BEAR YOU GREETINGS!

SARKO LOATHES LIES, GOLDEN ONE--AND DISLIKES AMBUSHES EVEN MORE!
SO TELL ME--WHERE ARE THE OTHER MEN?
THERE ARE NO OTHERS!
MY SUBJECTS ARE ALL MAIDENS--OF UN-SPEAKABLE BEAUTY!
YES--THEY ARE! THAT WENCH ALONE IS WORTH A THOUSAND MALE SLAVES!
I PROPOSE A BARGAIN, DAX! HELP ME RESTORE MY WAVE-DAMAGED SHIP--AND I WILL BRING YOUR TRIBE TO CIVILIZATION...
--AS SLAVES!
YOUR OFFER IS MOST GENEROUS!
WE MUST HAVE A FEAST--DRINK A ROYAL TOAST TO SEAL OUR NEW-FORGED PACT!
THE WINE IS LIKE SWEET-LACED NECTAR--AND YOUR WOMEN ARE INHUMAN IN THEIR LOVELINESS!
THERE ARE MORE WONDERS HERE THAN YOU THINK, SARKO!

AND WHAT DO YOU MEAN BY THAT CRYPTIC COMMENT, IMPASSIVE ONE?

NOT FAR FROM HERE IS A CAVE-- BRIMMING WITH GLEAMING METALS AND GLITTERING JEWELS!
PERHAPS YOU WOULD ACCEPT A SHARE--FOR TAKING US OFF THIS PRIMITIVE ISLAND!


PAYMENT IS NOT NECESSARY, FRIEND DAX--YET I AM CURIOUS CONCERNING THIS TREASURE!
LET US GO-- AT ONCE!

WAVERING TORCH LIGHT ILLUMINATES A BEDAZZLING DISPLAY OF UNTOLD WEALTH! HEAVY COFFERS ARE CHOKED WITH GOLD--WINKING GEMS CARPET THE COLD STONE FLOOR...
THIS IS BUT A SMALL PORTION.
THE REST IS IN THE RUBY LAKE!
BY SATAN'S HELL-SPAWNED HORDES!!

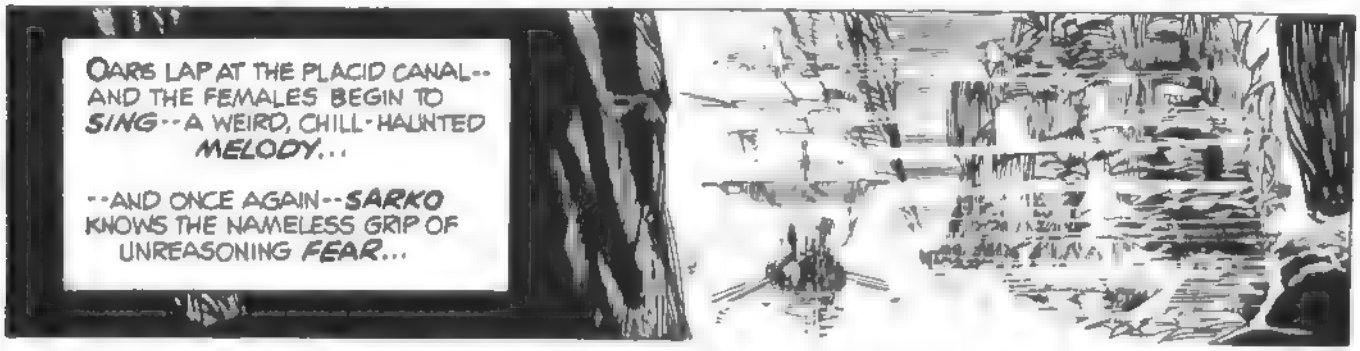
"I WOULD LIKE TO SEE THESE SO-CALLED SIRENS," GROWLS THE LEERING SLAVE-MASTER, "AND THEIR WAVE-WASHED WEALTH!"
"ONLY A FOOL," REPLIES DAX, "MOCKS WHAT HE DOES NOT UNDERSTAND!"

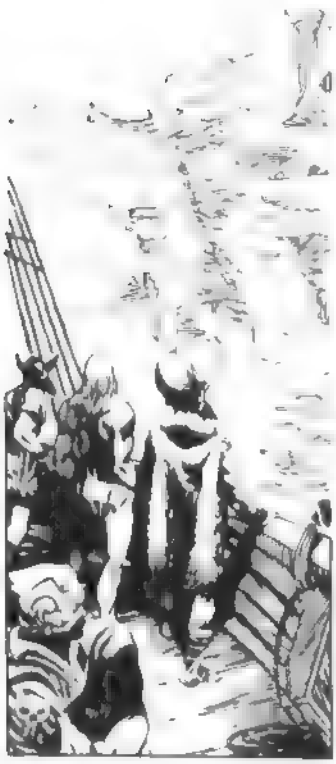
AND...YOU... CLAIM ...THERE'S MORE?
YES! MUCH MORE--IN THE LAKE!
MY HIGH-PRIESTESS SAYS ENCHANTED SIRENS DWELL IN THE CRYSTAL WATER--WORSHIPPING A SUNKEN, ROCK-HEWN IDOL!

SARKO DOES NOT TREMBLE FROM CHILDISH TALES!
I MUST VISIT THIS RUBY LAKE-- AS SOON AS POSSIBLE!

AS YOU WISH! WE MUST FOLLOW A CANAL-- TO THE HEART OF THE ISLE!
REPAIRS ARE NOT YET COMPLETED-- BUT IT MATTERS LITTLE!
WE DEPART WITH THE DAWN!

THE NEXT DAY--WHEN A NEW SUN SHEDS ITS FIERCE WARMTH ON KRIWO-AES...
I STILL DON'T UNDERSTAND! WHY MUST THE WOMEN JOURNEY WITH US?
AS THEIR RULER-- THE MAIDENS ARE EVER AT MY SIDE!


OARS LAP AT THE PLACID CANAL-- AND THE FEMALES BEGIN TO SING--A WEIRD, CHILL-HAUNTED MELODY...
--AND ONCE AGAIN--SARKO KNOWS THE NAMELESS GRIP OF UNREASONING FEAR...


BUT THE MOOD QUIETLY PASSES--AS THE SHIMMERING LAKE COMES INTO SIGHT...

--AND WITH IT-- A TREASURE TROVE THAT COULD ONLY BELONG TO THE GODS...
THE BOTTOM SHINES LIKE A GOLDEN MIRROR! IT IS BEYOND BELIEF!

DAX--! BEFORE WE LEAVE FOR CIVILIZATION--YOUR PEOPLE MUST BRING ME GOLD-- TONS OF IT!
IT IS ONLY FITTING--THAT WE PAY FOR OUR PASSAGE!

LITHE, FLEETING FIGURES DART AND ARE GONE--SWALLOWED BY THE LAKE...

THE WOMEN START TO WEAVE ABOUT A CYCLOPEAN IDOL--PERFORMING AN EERIE RITE--AN UNEARTHLY, AQUATIC BALLET...
WHILE DAX LOCATES A DULLY-GLINTING BLADE FROM THE GEM-ENCRUSTED BOTTOM--AND SWIMS FOR SARKO'S HULL...
ARMS STRAINING--LUNGS NEAR-BURSTING--HE PRIES ONE STORM-WEAKENED PLANK LOOSE--FOLLOWED BY ANOTHER--AND YET A THIRD!
SARKO! WATER--FLOODING THE HOLD! WE'RE SINKING!
OUR SWORDS WILL REWARD THEIR TREACHERY--WITH BLOOD!
I KNEW THOSE WRETCHES WERE NOT TO BE TRUSTED!
DAX WILL BE THE FIRST TO FALL--WHEN WE GET ASHORE!

THE MAIDENS TWIST, TURN, ARE TRANSFORMED INTO THEIR TRUE SHAPE--SILVER-SCALED SIRENS--DENIZENS OF THE DEEP! A GRIMLY, GRINNING IDOL TOWERS OVER THE GRISLY TABLEAU--RADIATING AN AURA OF WARPED JUSTICE! FOR AN INSTANT--SARKO REALIZES WHY THIS IS CALLED THE RUBY LAKE--AS HIS BLOOD BOILS UPWARD IN BILLOWING CRIMSON CLOUDS...
I WAS A SLAVE ONCE--UNTIL I ESCAPED--AND CAME TO KRIWO-AES! THE SIRENS THOUGHT ME A SEA-GOD AND MADE ME KING!
THE WATER-WENCHES ARE NOT EASY PREY, SARKO--AS YOU CAN TESTIFY!
THE SIRENS SHIFT TO HUMAN FORM--AND JOIN THE LONE WARRIOR! THEIR SONGS ARE UNWORLDLY, DREAD-TAINTED MELODIES! AND SOMETIMES--JUST SOMETIMES--DAX UNDERSTANDS THE FORMLESS FEELING OF FEAR...

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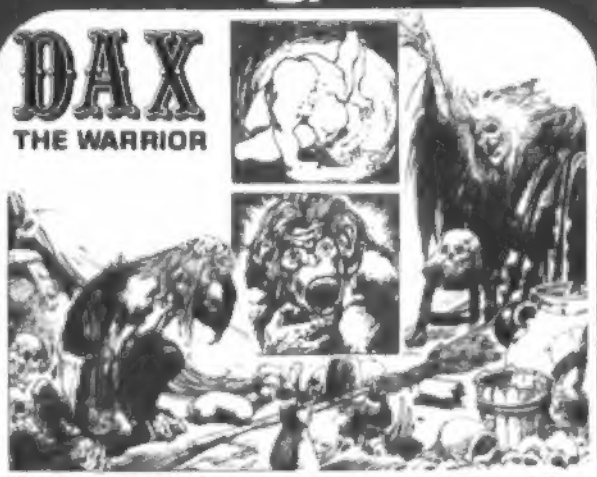

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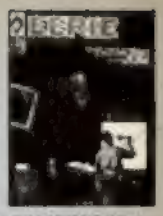
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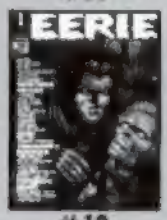
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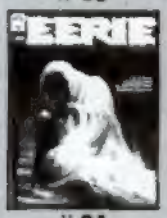
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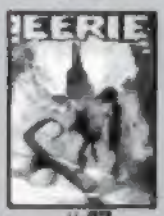
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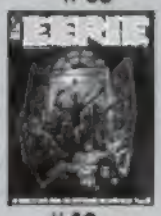
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